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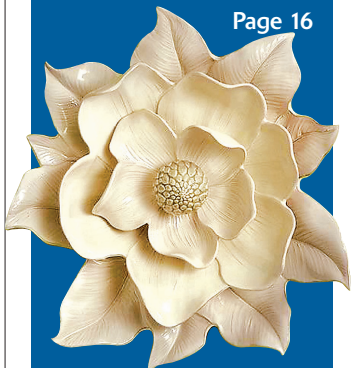
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CHIEF EDITOR:
JIAN RONG
NEWS EDITOR:
YU SHANSHAN
DESIGNER: YANG GEN

Unique pieces
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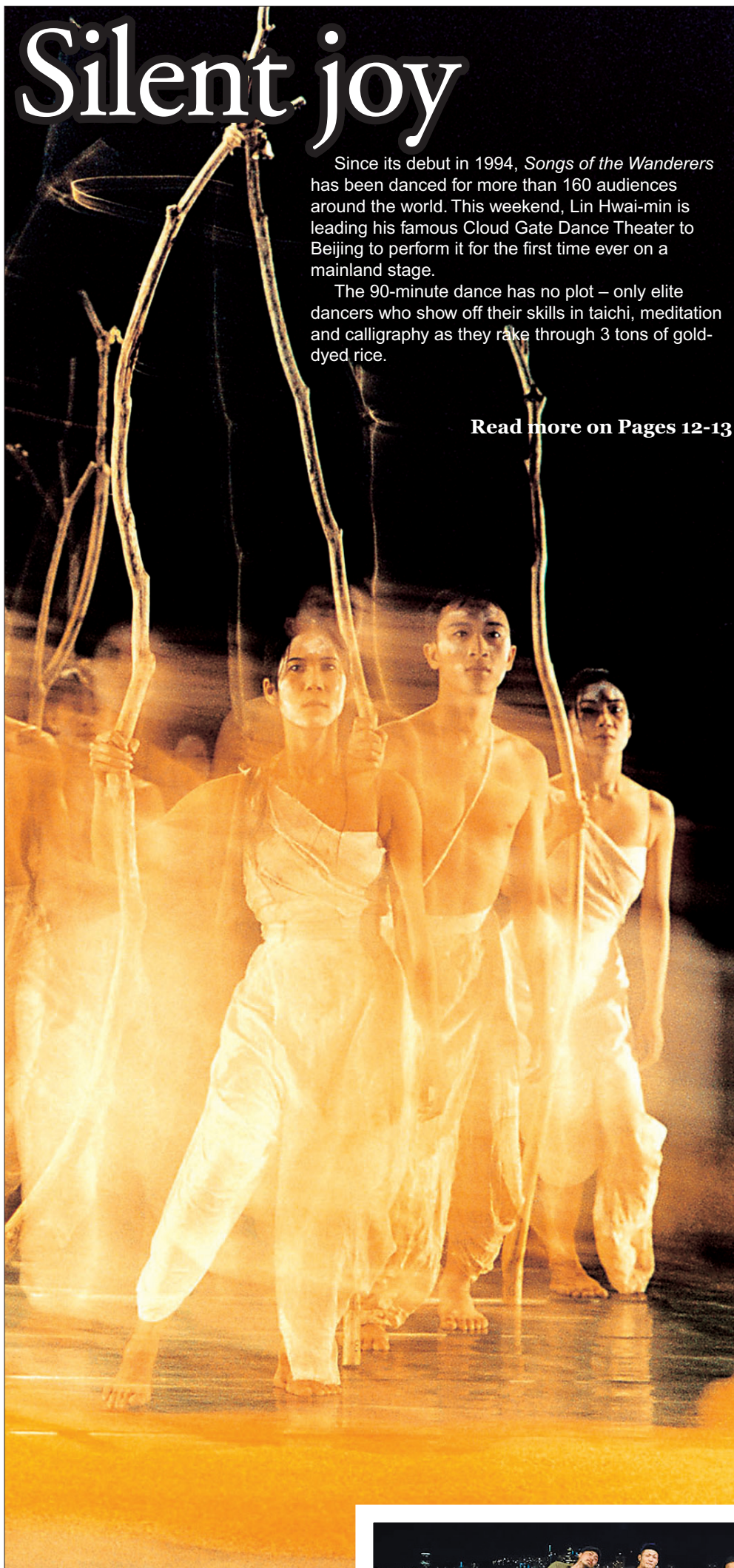
北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

Silent joy

Since its debut in 1994, *Songs of the Wanderers* has been danced for more than 160 audiences around the world. This weekend, Lin Hwai-min is leading his famous Cloud Gate Dance Theater to Beijing to perform it for the first time ever on a mainland stage.

The 90-minute dance has no plot – only elite dancers who show off their skills in taichi, meditation and calligraphy as they rake through 3 tons of gold-dyed rice.

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Capital behind on subculture

An American observer says second- and third-tier cities are the place to go to find China's thriving underground youth culture.



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Out of their shells!

Nutshell Time is dragging top professors off campus to share their knowledge.

Bloggers give rural schools a free lunch

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China buyers spend wildly on world art

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Forum discusses capital's future development

By Zhao Hongyi

More than 400 strategists, city planners, economists and representatives from the fields of business, finance, culture and diplomacy met Wednesday in Beijing to discuss the city's future development.

The Forum on a World City with Chinese Characteristics was the second to discuss the position of the capital in the Asia-Pacific region, and more broadly its position in the world.

2011 marks the first year of the national government's 12th Five-Year Plan, an economic development initiative being applied throughout the country. But the Beijing government has its own Five-Year Plan, in which it hopes to further its transformation into

a world-class city.

The city aims to become a center of international events and a host to multinational corporations' headquarters – one with some of the world's finest human resources and an ideal place to live.

"We are not building Beijing into another New York, Paris, Tokyo and London," said Zheng Wantong, vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. "Beijing must rely on its own resources and develop with Chinese characteristics."

The speakers focused on this topic and discussed how city planning, economic development and international financing could help it reach its target. Foreign speak-

ers introduced lessons learned abroad that could guide the capital in its development.

The forum is held by the Municipal Office of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Chaoyang District, one of the 18 districts and counties of Beijing.

Chaoyang is the most developed area of Beijing and is home to the capital's central business district (CBD), the location of 70 of its multinational corporations and media headquarters.

The district is being entrusted by the municipality to operate as the front lines of the city's future development.

At the forum, Mayor Guo presented 15 foreign residents with the Great Wall Friendship Award, an award granted to outstanding

foreigners for their contributions to the development of the city.

Recipients included engineers like Antonius Cornelis Joha of Holland DHV (Beijing), Kevin Geiger of the Animation School of Beijing, Michael Kahn-Ackermann, the German sinologist and chairman of Goethe Institute (China), and Carl Walter of JP Morgan Chase Bank (China).

The Great Wall Friendship Award is a special honor created in 1999. Thus far, it has been given to 160 individuals from 28 countries.

"We welcome more foreign experts and friends to work and live in Beijing," Ji Lin, vice mayor of Beijing, said in his speech. "Let's work together to make Beijing a more prosperous world city."

Deprecated license plates head to next lottery

By Zhang Dongya

Starting July, applicants who obtain a license plate in the lottery will be required to purchase a car within six months.

Plates that go unused will be revoked and returned to the lottery.

The new license-plate lottery measures, which took effect on January 1, limit the number of new vehicles that can be added to Beijing's roads. The city issues 17,600 new plates each month.

The Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport recorded a total of 397,543 applications in the city's third license-plate lottery last Saturday, 100,000 more than in February.

Traffic has eased greatly since last year, said Liu Xiaoming, director of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport, speaking on a radio program Monday. He said the city's traffic congestion index dropped 8 to 10 percent this year.

In the first three months of the lottery, many plates ended up being granted to speculators who did not purchase cars. There were also cases where entire families entered the pool hoping to win a plate and ended up with extra plates that went unused.

Beijingers who wanted to buy cars but failed to win a plate complained bitterly about the system, and the problem of unused idle plates seriously damaged car sales during the first quarter.

New lottery measures will require unused plates to be returned to the system after six months. Starting July, the number of plates in each lottery will be 176,000 plus the number of plates that expired during the previous month.

The local commission of transport is also considering plates that are abandoned by local drivers to the pool, though this would require the approval of transportation authorities.

A Beijing resident surnamed Sun said he was looking forward to the change. "My family was lucky enough to get two [license plates], but we only need one. We want to give up the other to give someone a chance to obtain it legally," Sun said.

According to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport, the local government will invest 4.5 billion yuan to expand transportation infrastructure in six districts this year.

Starting today, parking fees for downtown areas within Third Ring Road will be increased. All employees who collect parking fees will be given special certificates to combat the problem of people impersonating parking fee collectors.

All parking spaces within Third Ring Road will have electronic parking payment systems by the end of the year.

Baidu to share profits with authors on Wenku

By Zhang Dongya

Search giant Baidu set up a "Wenku cooperative platform" Wednesday, saying it would offer comprehensive protection of copyrights on its Baidu Wenku.

The change was Baidu's official response to a broad group of writers who united to protest the site's unauthorized distribution of their copyrighted works.

According to its front page, Baidu Wenku will begin to sell e-books and cooperate with the copyright holders to promote the books and share advertising revenue. The ad-sharing model may be in place at the end of the month.

According to the announcement, 11 copyright holders have signed on to have their 416 works distributed in this way.

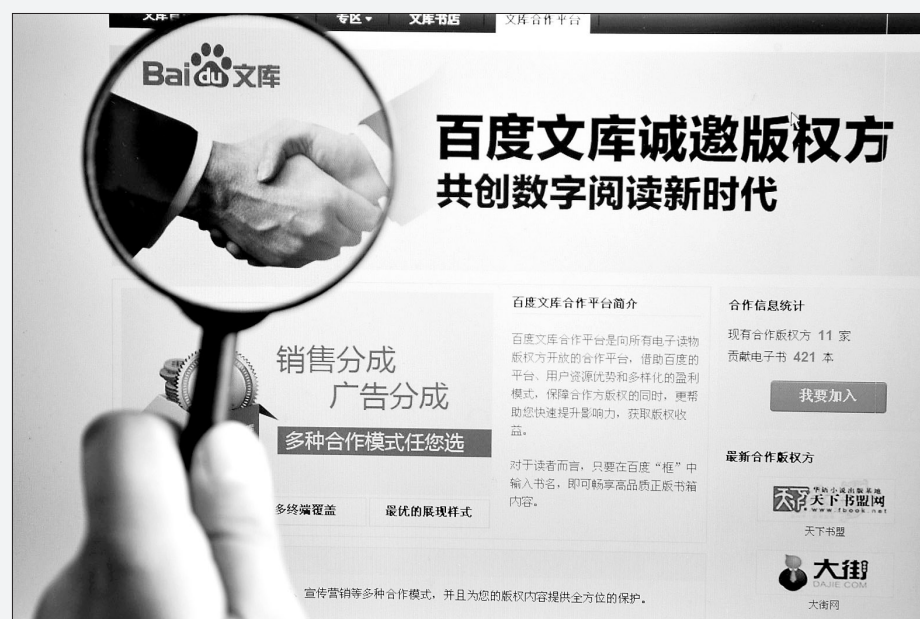
"I have made clear my position in the company: continue [Baidu Wenku] if you can; otherwise, just close the business," said Baidu's Central Executive Officer Li Yanhong at the 2011 IT CEO Summit in Shenzhen.

Li said he hopes the new model can profit both copyright holders and Baidu.

Last week, representative writers attempted to negotiate with Baidu, but the company denied that it played a role in e-book piracy. On March 26, Han Han, one of the signed writers, wrote an open letter to Li Yanhong on his blog, trying to push the company to action.

Han talked about the collapse of the publishing industry and the difficulties facing professional writers.

"You have lived in the US for a long time and your



Baidu is re-inventing its Wenku to weather claims of copyright infringement.

CFP Photo

wife and daughter are there now. You know well what the results would be if Baidu opened a search engine called Baidu US to share all the books by American writers and all the music by musicians for free. You would never do it, and you would never try to tell Americans that Baidu US was just a sharing platform that has nothing to do with you," Han wrote.

Later that day, Baidu apologized to some of the writers and said it would delete their works from Baidu Wenku within three days.

As of Tuesday, the number of works available on Baidu Wenku has fallen from 2.8 million to 447. Where it once reported 20 million documents available for sharing, its front page now claims only 16 million.

Novels like Jia Pingwa's *Qin Qiang* and all of Murong Xuecun's works have been purged from the database.

Baidu also said it would offer authors who make their works available on Baidu Wenku a "reasonable part of the advertisement income and payments made to read them online."

Writers insisted that Baidu should be responsible for checking the copyright claims of works users upload to its database.

"We hope Baidu will abide by the principles of copyright law and investigate before publishing. We hope all the Internet companies including Baidu change their profit models [to not rely on piracy]," said Lu Jinbo, general manager of Wanrong Book, one of the negotiating representatives.

"The Internet company should check the copyright status of the works it chooses to carry. If it fails to delete them, then it should bear joint responsibility for any infringement," said Chen Rubo, a tort lawyer.

Baidu spokesperson Zhu Guangze said the company has not profited from the advertisements on Baidu Wenku, and that several online bookstores affiliated with the site have seen a three-fold turnover in sales since the site opened in 2009.

"Baidu has surrendered and we have made our point of copyright protection clear. The battle is over, but I hope writers, publishers and the government continue to monitor the Web for future infringements," Lu Jinbo said Wednesday on his mircoblog.

Microbloggers bring rural students a free lunch

By Annie Wei

Saturday will be an exciting day for more than 100 students at the rural Shabei Primary School in Guizhou Province. Starting tomorrow, the school will begin providing its students with a free lunch of a bowl of rice, a bowl of vegetable soup and an egg.

But the cause for celebration is not limited to the students and their parents: more than 200 media groups and countless bloggers from around the country are giving themselves a pat on the back for bringing their brainchild to fruition.

Shabei students, like many of their peers throughout the countryside, don't have a lunch hour because their school does not have food. The new volunteer program will create a cafeteria for the students and a free lunch model that can be easily duplicated and applied to other schools throughout the country.

Shabei's success will be a promising start to the campaign to end hunger in rural schools.



The free lunch campaign provides students a bowl of rice, a bowl of vegetable soup and an egg.

Luo Guojia/CFP Photo

Poverty hurts children

The idea to provide rural children with a free lunch was first proposed by Deng Fei, the 33-year-old editorial director of *IFeng Weekly*.

Deng found his audience as a Web journalist last September while covering a property dispute between two sisters and the Yihuang, Jiangxi Province government, which was doing its utmost to hide the conflict from its superiors.

The girls locked themselves in a small toilet as 44 government officers marched on them. Deng was on the scene writing constant updates about the conflict on his microblog. His thousands of readers worked together to pressure Yihuang's superiors to take action.

Since then, Deng wielded his Weibo followers in grassroots campaigns to reunite child beggars with their parents, provide surgery to impoverished rural children and to shelter and house poor people who had come to the capital to petition the central government.

"Since last September, we have helped six lost children find their parents," Deng said.

That campaign revealed a startling fact: children were ending up on the streets to escape a harsh environment at home – where a day at school meant a day of starving, and the need to work kept many from ever finishing a full day of class.

Children in need

In the last two months, many publications have reported on how these impoverished children are left with no food to eat while at school.

On one CCTV program, report-

ers interviewed primary school students in Guizhou Province who had been left to build their own stove and drag dry wood, rice and vegetables to school. A similar blog post from a volunteer teacher in Guizhou Province said her students had no food and lived on water for lunch.

Inspired by the reports, the China Research Development Foundation held a press conference in Beijing on February 27 to address the problem of malnutrition in the countryside.

In a study group of 1,459 students between the ages of 10 and 13, 12 percent were found to have stunted growth as a result of malnutrition. These students were 6 to 15 centimeters shorter than their urban peers. About 9 percent of the students were 7 to 15 kilograms underweight.

Xinshijie Zhoukan, a news weekly, ran a story about Du'an County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, where 16,025 boarding students had lived on yellow beans and rice for the last nine years, resulting in widespread scurvy. In Xiji County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, boarding school students ate nothing but potato noodles. They were found to have vitamin C, calcium and iron deficiencies.

Deng and his peers looked to India for a solution.

Since India began offering free school lunches to primary school students in 2000, the drop-out rate among rural students has sharply declined.

Xinshijie Zhoukan reported that many countries offer free lunches to students. Japan began offering free lunches shortly after World War II, and the US makes government-subsidized lunches available to 30 million low-income families.

Children were ending up on the streets to escape a harsh environment at home – where a day at school meant a day of starving, and the need to work kept many from ever finishing a full day of class.

— Deng Fei, who used Weibo to help child beggars

"The Chinese government has invested a lot in building schools in rural areas, but I don't think it has examined the problems starting in these schools' cafeterias," Deng said.

Weibo to the rescue

Deng and his followers chose one of the country's poorest regions as the site of their trial.

Since March, he and his supporters have been visiting schools in rural Guiyang Province every weekend. They spoke with the teachers, administrators and local committees to try and create a long-term free lunch model that could be applied to other areas.

Some schools persuaded the

county committee to turn spare rooms into a cafeteria and to grow its own food on nearby plots.

A teacher from a Guizhou Province school said her school day ended at 3 pm. "We have no lunch and students cannot concentrate in the afternoon. They are so hungry and they want to go home for food."

A 24-year-old teacher surnamed Luo at Xinzhong Primary School said his school has nowhere to store coal and rice, but has promised to start cooking 140 eggs every day for students as lunch. Feeding its 137 students will cost the school less than 2,000 yuan per month, Deng said.

But tomorrow's lunch trial has generated as much concern as support.

"Only a bowl of rice, a bowl of vegetable soup and an egg? Is soaking the rice into soup good for stomach?" one blogger wrote in response to the news.

Residents in the provincial capital of Guiyang asked how they could get involved, and a local home appliance company offered to donate electric rice cookers.

A nutritionist also offered to create a diet with recipes that used common local plants that may be going underused.

From the grass roots

But despite the wide support, many bloggers question whether

the government's responsibility is being shoved off onto the people.

Deng sees it differently.

"In my more than 10 years of reporting on social stories, I've learned that the government is largely ignorant of a lot of these terrible things. We have to take it upon ourselves and make the first step," Deng said.

Deng said he and other volunteers believed that once the free-lunch model proves to be working, the government will get involved to keep it running.

The current program will be funded only by micro-donations from average individuals. Deng and the others already rejected large sponsorship offers of 1,700 or more, preferring instead to rely on cooperation, the government and local village's desire to get involved and making the lunch trial work.

The free lunch trial on Sunday will bring parents to the school to learn how it works, something the volunteers consider essential to success.

"In the long run, parents and local villagers are the ones who are going to have to make this work," Deng said.

For individual donations, the team plans to open a Taobao to sell off individual "love" lunches for 4 yuan each.

"We are not forgetting about our plans to use Weibo to rescue child beggars. But we need to make sure that when we send them back home, they have something to go home to – that means feeding the children and safeguarding their basic rights and needs," Deng said.

Art stocks attract gods of gambling

By Li Zhixin

In response to the increasing value of Chinese art on the auction market, the Tianjin Culture and Art Exchange released two art stocks on its website on January 16. In the two months since, the value of these stocks has exploded, growing more than 800 percent.

But the securitization of art may be a new way for gamblers to continue making money as the government pushes more of them out of the housing market. While the stocks are profitable now, what will happen to ordinary investors when the speculators pull out their hot money to wager on another market?

The market's darling

Bai Gengyan, a traditional painter, never expected his paintings to be the hottest investment products.

In the last two months, the combined market value of his paintings, *Yellow River Roars* and *The Autumn of Yansai Lake*, has soared to 180 million yuan since the exchange issued a combined 11 million shares at 1 yuan each.

Only on the first day of sale, the stocks grew 103 percent and 91 percent respectively. By March 16, the closing price of *Yellow River Roars* was 17.16 yuan per share; *The Autumn of Yansai Lake Stock* closed at 17.07 yuan per share.

Yet not one of Bai's paintings has ever sold for more than 4 million yuan at auction.

"Through the magic of securitization, the value of Bai's works has remained ahead of works by Zhang Daqian, Xu Beihong and Qi Baishi, the greatest Chinese painters of modern times," said Gong Jisui, a professor of art management at the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

The exchange reported that more than 40,000 investors have bought into the stocks, and the investment threshold has risen from 50,000 yuan to 500,000 yuan as of March 10.

But no barrier to entry could quell the craze.

"Only several minutes after opening, the stocks froze. I have been trying to buy in for several days but always miss my chance," Guan Yueming, an investor, complained on his blog.

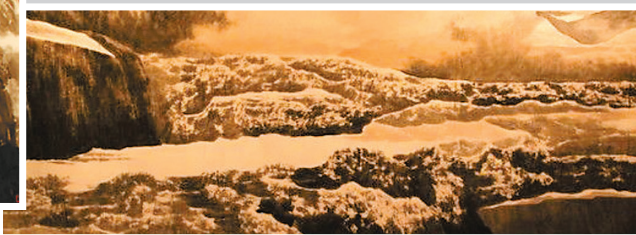
On March 11, the exchange introduced a second batch of art stocks including seven other paintings by Bai and a 4.34-carat diamond valued at 53 million yuan. The stocks grew 334 percent within the first week.

"It is clear that the investors are very confident about the future development of these new stocks," said Liu Hongwei, the president of the Tianjin Culture and Art Exchange.

"By breaking works into many shares, we offer ordinary people a chance to invest in high-end art — something that used to be a game reserved for the rich," he said.



The Autumn of Yansai Lake



Yellow River Roars



The Tianjin Culture and Art Exchange is turning art into stocks. The securitization began at the start of this year.

CFP Photos

Incredible risks

Tianjin was not the first to issue art stocks. Both Shanghai and Shenzhen run exchanges that deal in cultural properties.

In early 2010, the Shenzhen Cultural Property Right Exchange implemented the same market. However, its investment threshold was extremely high — too high for a new market.

Tianjin's low investment threshold and publicity quickly made the art stocks very popular with investors. Although the new stocks have grown vigorously, many experts think there are cumulative risks behind the soaring prices.

"This boom is absolutely unreasonable. It is propelled

exclusively by money as new investors dip into and out of the pond. These art stocks have no entity to back them up, and they cannot grow in real value. The bubble will eventually burst — the question of who loses big will depend on who is left holding the relay baton when the race is over," Gong said.

He said the current enthusiasm is closely related to government regulation of the housing market and turbulence in the normal stocks.

The lack of supervision of art stocks is also a big problem. "In the process of buying and selling, Tianjin's exchange has the sole powers of supervision. When it makes a mistake in issuing or

overseeing the stocks, art investment will drop like a castle out of the sky," said Zheng Jianmin, the investment manager of China International Trust and Investment Corporation.

The stock is also an easy target for hot money. "Its existence gives a green light to speculators. When the share prices rise, the speculators will pull out immediately and leave ordinary investors on a sinking ship," he said.

The motive of the Tianjin Culture and Art Exchange shareholders is also questionable, as many of them are connected to real estate developers.

"I think shareholders should be people in the art trades — people

like dealers or operators of cultural institutions — who have a more sophisticated ability to assess the value of art before engaging in a transaction," Gong said.

Responding to these concerns, the Tianjin stock supervisory authority ordered the Tianjin Culture and Art Exchange to suspend its operations in the middle of March.

On March 17, the exchange posted a public notice on its website saying, "In order to decrease investment risk and protect investors' rights, *Yellow River Roars* and *The Autumn of Yansai Lake* stocks are suspended from trading until further notice."

A future uncertain

Perhaps the real legacy of the art stocks is that they attracted more people to recognize art.

"However, the securitization of art has nothing to do with collection. It's just gambling by another name," said Wei Pengju, president of the Creative Culture Research Institute at Central University of Finance and Economics. "The investors care little about the market price and its collectable value — they are only

betting on whether there will be newcomers in the market."

He said art in general is a poor item for investment: it has no net assets, no firm growth and no profit model. "Artworks can't be collected on a hunch. While some of the artistry may be unique, there is no unified standard that can be used to evaluate listed works," he said.

He said some foreign financial institutions have special data

banks that contain information about transaction price and the source of the artwork when they do assessment and evaluation, but the China markets lack a counterpart.

"Once art ends up on the stock market, its virtual price seriously deviates from its real market price. In the end, the burden of weathering the bubble is passed to the ordinary investor," he said.

Guan Yueming, a senior investor, said the art stocks were a novel idea and worth trying.

"But the new market is obviously in need of guidance. It is currently groping its way about — building experience," he said. "The exchange should employ qualified consultants to recommend excellent works. The combination of lay money and professional recommendations would result in less risky appreciation."

Although art seems to be destined for commoditization, many artists fear the market will suck the last bit of creativity from an industry ill in spirit.

"The value of art is better increased by finding new ways to communicate with the spirit. We are not supposed to debase ourselves to produce purely profitable works that will be the new tools of commercial speculators," said Liu Sidong, a painter.

Can the US feed China?

Expert worries Americans farming for Chinese

"For Americans who live in a country that's been the world's breadbasket for more than half a century, a country that's never known food shortages or runaway food prices, the world is about to change."

So says Lester R. Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, in a recent *Washington Post* article. In a critical look at China's agriculture and its long-term ability to feed its burgeoning population, Brown comes to some startling conclusions.

"Like it or not, we are going to be sharing our grain harvest with the Chinese, no matter how much it raises our food prices," he says.

Brown said several factors are converging to cause the Chinese to have to go outside their borders to ensure food security.

Some time back, Chinese leaders opted to be self-sufficient in grain production and import soybeans. "China's decision to import vast quantities of soybeans led to a restructuring of agriculture in the Western hemisphere, the only region that could respond to such a massive demand," Brown says.

"The US now has more land in soybeans than in wheat. Brazil has more land in soybeans than in all grains combined. Argentina, with twice as much land in soybeans as in grain, is fast becoming a soybean monoculture," he says. "For the hemisphere as a whole, there is now more land in soybeans than in either wheat or corn."

Brown says the numerous dust storms originating in the region each year are causing China's food supply to tighten. "Now, after 15 years of near self-sufficiency in grain, it seems likely that China will soon turn to the world market for massive grain imports, as it already has done for 80 percent of its soybeans."

And, according to Brown, the US has no choice but to send it. "When the US Treasury Department auctions off securities every month to finance the US fiscal deficit, China has been a major buyer. It holds over \$900 billion worth of US Treasury Securities. China is our banker."

(Agencies)

Would a growing China add risks and pressures to the global food supply? A recent article in the *Washington Post* by Lester Brown warns that China is losing a long battle to feed its growing population on its own, as old deserts grow, as new ones form and as more and more irrigation wells go dry.



Local farmers harvesting rice paddy at a village in Chongqing.

Xiang Yuankun/IC Photo

The third eye

China's food is secure

By Liang Meilan

International anxiety over food supply is not groundless, but many sources have said China's food supply is secure, even if it faces certain challenges.

"With the speeding of industrialization and urbanization these years, the country has entered a period where it's lost the most farmland in history," said Chen Xiwen, vice director of the Office of Central Rural Work Leading Group, in a press release last Thursday.

"To address the problem, the foremost task is to preserve cropland," Chen said, pointing out that the Chinese government

has been upholding a strict arable land protection policy.

"Laws and regulations will soon be issued to tackle the problem of industrialization and commercialization of arable land," he said.

Chen was also confident about the stability of domestic food supply. "The country's grain reserve amounts to more than 400 billion jin, which meets domestic grain need for more than half a year. And the reserve is higher than 30 percent of the total of yearly grain domestic consumption, far above the international safety line of 16 percent," he said.

"Leaving out soybeans, China's degree of

grain self-sufficiency is higher than 97 percent," he added.

In response to the decreasing farmland, Chen said the government has already attached great importance in infrastructure construction in terms of irrigation and in mobilizing farmers' positivity by means of raising grain purchase prices and diversifying subsidies.

"Food price fluctuation does exist to some extent," Chen said. "As long as enough support is given to farmers and arable land areas are stabilized, steady farm produce supply will definitely be ensured, and stable food prices will be guaranteed as well."

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《北京青年》周刊出品

Madness in the art market

By Huang Daohen

Wealthy Chinese art buyers are taking the art world by storm.

Last year, an anonymous telephone bidder, later confirmed to be Chinese, offered a historic \$106 million for a work by Picasso; now, a bidding competition between Chinese buyers at Sotheby's has pushed a Chinese vase estimated at \$800 to a staggering \$18 million.

The art world is going mad. Why are China's investors so crazy for art?



Guardian is one of the first auction companies specializing in the sale of Chinese art.

Xiao Yi/CFP Photo

Vase frenzy

In a demonstration of wild spending, Chinese buyers competing for an ordinary vase pushed last Tuesday's Week of Asian Art in New York to a record.

In what could rank as the biggest underestimated auction, the vase that was appraised by Sotheby's for just \$800 finally soared to a staggering \$18 million (118 million yuan).

More than seven Chinese buyers bid for the vase. The final bidder, believed to be Chinese, made the bid through the telephone anonymously, Bloomberg reported.

The underestimated vase, decorated with birds and peonies, is dated to the early 20th century. But it had a Qianlong seal, and anything from the 1736-1795 era would be worth a higher price, the report said.

The vase came from the collection of Dai Runzhai, a Chinese art dealer now living in New York. Dai moved to the US in the 1950s and has become a famous art collector with many important Chinese art collections.

"It's outstanding if it's genuine," said Andrew Kahane, a New York dealer specializing in Chinese art.

"There seems to be an extraordinary amount of cash out there. Chinese buyers want to be seen spending a lot of money. They want to be seen setting world records. Whatever was collected by Emperor Qianlong, they want," he said.

Last week's sales attracted col-

lectors from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Art storm by Chinese

The art world has been at fever pitch since Chinese billionaire art buyers started filling the queue.

Last year, an anonymous telephone bidder astounded the world as he offered \$106.4 million for a work by Pablo Picasso at a Christie's sale in New York. The bidder has since been confirmed to be Chinese.

The painting, about 1.66 by 1.33 meters, is a portrait of Picasso's and was priced to sell for about \$70 million. But that was just one of a whole series of art auctions claimed by Chinese buyers.

Thanks to those Chinese buyers, most of whom are newly wealthy entrepreneurs, global auction prices slid very little during the global financial crisis, a Christie's report said.

In fact, the new group of Chinese buyers is creating an electric shock for the art world, said Ken Yeh, director of Christie's in Hong Kong.

"The potential for art, both dynastic porcelain vases and western art, in China is huge and massive," Yeh said. "There were very few Chinese people buying impressionist modern art in 2003, but you feel suddenly, there has been almost a surge in recent years."

Yeh believes this surge is bullish prospecting. "[The Chinese mainland buyers] have just started, and there is a lot of potential for this to continue," he said.

The auction director said there would be increasing numbers of mainland investors interested in collecting art. "Chinese people have luxury products, cars and homes, and now they need new ways to express themselves."

Zhao Xiao, a professor of economics at University of Science and Technology Beijing, said the recent deals by Chinese buyers could send art prices soaring.

Zhao said the phenomenon in China is similar to that of the Japanese in the late-1980s, when wealthy Japanese art investors spent about \$10 billion buying art from all over the world and causing a 200 percent hike in the art index.

The joke went at that time, whenever you see an Asian face at Sotheby's or Christie's, the prices go up by 10 percent, Zhao said.

"While Chinese are becoming more wealthy, I don't hope for that to repeat again," he said.

Why crazy for art?

But what makes individuals so crazy about art?

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, when art lover Jim Eccles was a computer engineer, he fell in love with Chinese art and started collecting many paintings, which he bought for \$100 to \$300.

Now 76 and retired, Eccles is considering selling some of them. Based on the latest market price, the paintings he holds can fetch between \$80,000 and \$150,000 – or more.

Hobby aside, the paintings were a safe investment.

The price difference between Chinese and European art has attracted many Chinese investors, said Christie's Yeh.

Yeh said he doesn't understand the gap. While a Picasso painting sold for \$106 million, works by Zhang Daqian, known as China's Picasso, are usually priced about \$1 million – at most.

Many think that Zhang's works match Picasso's level, Yeh said.

But is it too late for Chinese individual collectors to dive in the market? Yeh thinks not. The market for Chinese art and investors is just starting.

Professor Zhao agreed. "We are increasingly seeing more Chinese mainland collectors buying top level international art," he said.

But they are not rushing in blindly.

"They are doing their research. They know what they are interested in and are asking the right questions," Zhao said. "Nothing surprises me about the Chinese art market today."



Market watch

China tops global art market

The country topped the US in terms of art market last year, according to a French-based Artprice, a company that tracks global art deals.

"It's an electroshock in the history of the global art market," Thierry Ehrmann, president of

Artprice, told AFP.

Fine art auctions in China – mainly Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai – topped \$3.1 billion last year, he said.

The country generated sales accounting for 33 percent of art sold last year, while the US took

about 30 percent. The UK represented 19 percent of the total, with France coming in fourth place with 5 percent, Artprice said.

But it was only four years ago that China nudged past France into third place, an indication of

how quickly the economic powerhouse has moved to the first rung of the rarefied world of art auctions, Ehrmann said.

Not just the amount of money changing hands has made China number one, but the rise of Chinese artists as well, he said.

Nervous investors fuel gold fever

By Huang Daohen

Speculative demands and inflation are driving a new gold rush in China after local investors pushed the prices of copper and garlic to a historic high last year.

On March 7, gold bullion hit a record \$1,444.95 (9,472.80 yuan) per ounce – an increase of 30 percent from last year. Investors see gold as an ultimate hedge against current uncertainty caused by Middle East unrest and the Sendai earthquake.

Though gold prices eased the past two weeks, the consumer prices still increased 5 percent last month.

"The Chinese people's interest in gold and seeing it as an asset is amazing," said Wang Lixin with the World Gold Council in Beijing.

The country, currently the world's biggest gold producer, may have to buy more gold bullion to meet surging domestic demand, Wang said.

Yi Gang, vice director of the People's Bank of China, said the nation imported more than 300 tons of gold last year and the demand has tripled to 580 tons since 2001.

Statistics from the central bank show that in the first two months this year, gold purchases increased to 200 tons.

A report by the World Gold Council says there is a clear trend for Chinese investment in gold as a monetary asset. The council says China's surging gold demand will soon surpass India as the world's largest gold consumer.

Many experts call the bullion boom a speculative bubble and discourage the public from buying gold. But Wang said the current demand is healthy: he sees the huge demand is as cultural and social imperative.

"Gold is indestructible and timeless. That is why it has been chosen as the basis of wealth that can be passed on to future generations," Wang said.

In China, people like to buy gold for dowries and weddings.

Wang said local investors' fondness for gold may have much to do with the government's recent restrictions on property and vehicular investments.

Gold is always the ultimate hedge against times of turmoil, Wang said. "Time and again we see that in any crisis, natural disaster or financial crisis, gold holds its value, and sometimes actually rises in the short term."

When people distrust the available methods of investment, they buy gold, he said.

Ethical dilemma

Man asks his mentally handicapped brother to donate kidney



Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Opinions are divided over whether a kidney from the mentally-disabled man (front) should be transplanted to save his ailing brother.

By Zhang Dongya

The case of a uremia patient in Guangdong Province trying to get a new kidney from his mentally handicapped brother has roused widespread discussion of medical and family ethics.

Gu Xincheng, 35, a native of Meizhou, Guangdong Province, was diagnosed with uremia at the end of last year. After unsuccessful treatment, Gu decided to take his doctor's advice and undergo a kidney transplant.

Gu was born in a poor family in Wuhua County in Meizhou, and has a mother who suffers from nose cancer. When he went home to get money for the surgery, he found his mother's condition had worsened.

Gu has three brothers: two of

them are migrant workers and a third, Xinying, works at home.

The Gu family decided that the youngest brother, Xinying, would be the one to donate his kidney. The family said they considered having Gu's father donate, but the doctor said his kidney wasn't healthy enough.

But does Xinying have the mental capability of consenting to organ donation? Some aren't so sure.

According to a *Guangzhou Daily* report, Xinying said "I don't know" when asked if he wanted to donate a kidney to his elder brother.

The family refused to acknowledge their son is mentally handicapped. They said it was not a congenital handicap, but one caused as a side effect

of being inoculated as a child. "He is just illiterate and introverted," they said.

According to present laws on human organ transplant, donors must have "full civil capacity."

Gu Xinying signed a statement for voluntary contribution on March 3, but the hospital said it could not approve it until Xinying has proven he is of full mental capacity.

On Monday, Xinying underwent an intelligence test at the Forensic Identification Center of Zhongshan University. The results will come out within 21 workdays.

The doctor said the exam tests whether he is able to act on his own.

Kidney transplant surgeries cost about 90,000 yuan with a

ready donor, while seeking a kidney from other sources can drive the cost up to 200,000 yuan.

There is a silver lining to this story, however. The other two brothers said they would be willing to donate a kidney if their little brother fails the intelligence test.

And the publicity the Gu family has received from this case has created an unexpected windfall. A family friend, Huang Cunwen, has been collecting donations via the Internet. So far, he's raised about 100,000 yuan.

"Many people called to donate money for Gu's family. We are now waiting for the test results from Xinying to decide when to have the surgery," Huang said.

Comment

Identification is only one part

"Full civil capacity" is a legal term. Besides a professional examination, the hospital should also take [Xinying's] education background and work performance into account. The most important thing is to ask the donor's permission and let him know the risk he will bear.

— Zhao Hu, deputy director of the Forensic Identification Center at Zhongshan University.

Be cautious about medical ethics

The vital thing in this case is whether the little brother has full civil capacity, no matter the degree of his mental handicap. If he had no capacity to make a decision by himself, he is not of "full civil capacity." He has the right of life. Furthermore, if allow a mentally handicapped person to donate his organ, it will open a can of worms and more ethical problems will arise. In my opinion, we should proceed with caution.

— Dong Yu, professor of Medical Ethics Center in Guangdong

Saving family is normal ethics

This is a hard case since family is involved. Family members should save each other without question, in most Chinese people's minds. Saving a person's life is the most urgent thing. I think if the family can sign a contract that says it will support the little brother no matter what, then the surgery should be done as soon as possible.

— Dee Uncle, netizen

Elders propose to stay at home during rush hour

By Zhao Hongyi

Elderly residents of a community in Fensiting Hutong, Dongcheng District recently posted on the forum of a community website that perhaps they should avoid public transportation during rush hours.

The post appeals to the city's 2.35 million retired elders who are older than 60. The reason, the elders say, is to leave room for the city's young people and working class, and contribute to helping alleviate Beijing's transportation gridlock.

"Youngsters live a hard life with

increasing work pressures, and on top of that they face heavy traffic every day," the proposal says.

Beijing has some of the worst traffic in the world, making for traffic jams and also congested subways and buses. Sources from the city's public transportation authority say the city's public transportation serves 13 million people every day.

Of those 13 million, more than half take public transportation during rush hour. Subway passengers, for instance, quadruple during rush hours. Six subway lines are under construction,

which authorities hope will lessen the congestion somewhat.

In 2009, the municipality granted free public transportation to senior citizens. Young passengers have adopted the habit of leaving seats to the elders — though this becomes difficult to do when everyone is packed into a small space.

The residential community at Fensiting Hutong is adopting more services for elders, such as exercising equipment, markets and dining venues, to keep them from having to take public transportation to find goods and services elsewhere.



Zhang Kaixin/CFP Photo

Elders propose to leave public transportation to young workers.

Comment

Thank you for your understanding

I'd like to express gratitude to the elders for proposing to leave transportation during rush hour to those who have jobs to go to — they are being much more tolerant and ratio-

nal than we had expected.

— Zhang Zhihua, staff member in the community office

I insist on my routine
I need to send my grandson to school every morning, then exercise in a nearby park and shop in the open market. It's been

my daily routine for years. I haven't noticed any "rush hour."

— Yu Qing, resident in an Andingmen community

Full support!

Each time on the subway, I'm always hesitant to accept the seats young people give me.

I fully agree with the proposal. Also, it's preferable to not have to travel long distances using public transport.

— Cao Can, retired famous opera actor
Let's make our society nicer
I'm impressed by our young-

sters and elders. It's more important to set up a social atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect in the process of solving the traffic problems and making our society a nicer place to live.

— Eddie Yang, Energy de France

Coming up from the underground

Young New Yorker observers Chinese subculture

By Liang Meilan

China's "street culture" has changed quite a lot since 15 years ago, when hip-hop was first being introduced to the country. Red hair and piercings are no longer automatically associated with hooliganism.

Many parts of this culture have been imported: skateboarding and break-dancing from the US, for example. But China's youth have also incorporated elements of their own, such as graffiti art that depicts contemporary Chinese issues. A multitude of subcultures have emerged to incubate the creative lifestyles of varying groups of individuals.

But those lifestyles very much remain underground.

Nicolas Peden, a 24-year-old American, is bridging the underground with the mainstream. His website, thepushshove.com, is an attempt to reflect and promote China's street culture.

He recently launched an 18-page zine called *China Outlook* about the characteristics of street culture in second- and third-tier cities, based on his personal experiences since 2009.

China Outlook not only offers a glimpse into subcultures but also hints at ways in which the people who currently work underground might one day develop their art and craft into sustainable businesses.

Interest inspires career path

Peden first came to China in 2006 to study at Shanghai's East China Normal University after graduating from Purchase College, State University of New York, where he studied modern China.

In his two years in Shanghai, he often made travel plans and was exposed to many regional youth cultures, where he saw similarities to what he experienced back in New York.

As he tells it, he would be what one could call a "punk" when he was growing up.

"Memories of taking falls off bikes and skateboards are still vivid, part of my joyous childhood," he recalled, adding that he has been getting in trouble for writing his name on walls since he could walk.

In 2009, he returned to Shanghai to immerse himself even deeper in China's subculture. He wanted to be a part of the new cultural movement and see it develop from the inside.

"My mother occasionally equates my moving to Shanghai to when she moved to New York from a small French town in the '70s. There's a pervasive feeling of endless, untapped potential," Peden said.

Thinking that a job in Shanghai's youth-focused marketing or advertising world was a logical choice, Peden secured a position at a local agency called enoVate, a young consumer monitor and market strategy designer.



Street culture very much remains underground in China.

For Peden, it was the perfect job, allowing him to study youth culture in China.

"I learned a tremendous amount there. Meanwhile, I began to focus my attention on youth cultures outside of Shanghai. Outside of Beijing even," he said.

Insights from total immersion

The feeling of endless, untapped potential drove Peden forward on the path of observing China's version of underground culture.

Whenever he could, Peden visited Wuhan's punk clubs, or went to Changsha to check out its graffiti, or sought out creative communes outside of Chengdu. He considered what he saw to be dynamic and unique.

He then convinced his company to sponsor him on a three-month trip through China to study youth culture in various cities. Much of the insight in *China Outlook* is a result of that trip.

"But I'd avoid the title 'street culture researcher,'" Peden said. "I feel that would separate me from the cultures I 'study.' I try not to 'study' them, but rather immerse myself in them."

He spent three months with Chinese peers racing fixed-gear bikes, sharing music and painting murals.

Peden couch-surfed whenever he could. "It wasn't always enjoyable – try sleeping on wooden living-room couches with no air-conditioning in the dead of a Wuhan, Changsha or Shenzhen summer," he said. "But the people I met made it all worth it."

With his horizon broadening, Peden was well on his way to understanding the reality of China's youth culture, especially

in its smaller cities.

"Of course, every couple days I would digest my experiences through the 'market research' lens I learned at enoVate," he said.

Unlike youth cultures with long histories in the US that have strong foundations but consequently have too well-defined boundaries, China's subcultures are constantly evolving.

"As more youth get into them, they'll undergo a localization process," Peden said. "China will have its own list of best skaters or graffiti artists with their own style."

As an example of how fast trends catch on, he said four years ago, no one knew about fixed-gear bikes, but now they can be found in pretty much all second-tier cities and many third-tier cities.

"In some cases, I'd argue the scene in tier two or three cities is more developed than that in Shanghai. Some of the best graffiti I saw was in Wuhan," he said.

Peden believes what he saw in these cities is a source of untapped creative potential.

"Many people wouldn't know it, but there's a lot happening in these cities," he said.

Seeking potential

Peden singled out Wuhan, Hubei Province, which has carved out quite a reputation for its music scene.

"It has one of the richest underground scenes in China, with most of China's original punks still drinking at the local Prison Bar," he said.

REN, a graffiti writer Peden met in Changsha, offered a simple explanation.

"Freer from social pressures – pressures that are overwhelmingly strong in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou – second- and third-tier youth have the time to explore personal interests or ambitions. Then combine that with increased access to international youth culture through the Internet and media," REN said.

"These cities are going to be major contributors to China's greater youth culture," Peden wrote in the zine.

"Besides, the assumption that tier two and three youth are merely emulating Shanghai and Beijing counterparts is outdated. Each of these cities has its own scenes with its own characteristics," Peden said.

The worry, however, is that without proper support, many of these scenes will not properly develop.

For example, underground music in China can no longer be lumped into one overarching "alternative music" category. As a result, it requires more nuanced producers to find the proper audience.

"Due to a lack of a proper distribution channel for recorded material, which is especially evident in Changsha and Tianjin, many original underground music pieces are wasted," Peden said.

And it's the loss of original content that gnaws at people like Peden, who understand that youth from across the country are hungry for it.

"When backpacking through central and southwestern China, a main talking point was music," he said. "Youth were eager to copy every album from my iPod: hip-hop, hardcore, dubstep included. To my astonishment, Bad Brains was really well received."

It may be necessary, then, for the scene to adopt some traits of business culture. Peden is trying to figure out, through his zine, how to tell established brands that China's subcultures can be profitable.

Peden said his publication is an experimental tool, a way to contribute to youth culture by enlarging their voices while providing possible solutions for its sustainability.

"I hope it piques an interest in those that formerly paid no attention to this topic," he said.

"My goal won't change: truly rep China," he said.

Nicolas Peden (first row, left) and his friends are all about the Chinese underground scene.

Photos provided by Nicolas Peden



Embassies in China engage in microblog diplomacy

"Microblog diplomacy" has become a new trend in international politics. China's growing microblog fever has spread to the foreign diplomatic corps in Beijing as more and more embassies are starting to microblog, believing this new media platform can help them gain popularity and direct responses from locals.

The ambassador of EU delegation hopes to have more Chinese fans

By Han Manman

The Delegation of the European Union (EU) to China officially launched its "EU in China" blogs and microblogs Tuesday in Beijing, becoming the latest in a long line of embassies in China to use new media to communicate with locals.

"Blogs and microblogs are a promising way to reach different types of people whom we don't meet in our daily work," said Markus Ederer, the new appointed ambassador of the EU Delegation to China.

The EU Delegation blogs and microblogs are spread among four major Chinese portals: Sina, Tencent, Tom and Sohu. According to the ambassador, the blogs and microblogs will mainly focus on non-political issues and hopefully introduce Chinese netizens to European lifestyle issues, including food and drink, art and culture, fashion and technology, sport and travel, study and environment.

The ambassador said the content aims to be interesting and useful for Chinese people. For example, since more Chinese

people are planning trips to Europe, the blogs will provide information and tips. They will also be interactive, with quizzes and competitions, online surveys and chances to win prizes.

"Hopefully the interactive aspect of blogging will help the Chinese understand why we are the way we are," he said.

"My colleagues and I at the EU Delegation are already fans of China and the Chinese people, so I invite you all to become our fans too," Ederer said. "This way we can engage in real interactive dialogue and build a bridge of friendship between Europe and China."

The ambassador's appeal is apparently working, as many journalists and attendees at the press conference immediately took out their mobile phones to become the microblogs' first followers.

This was Ederer's first public engagement as EU ambassador to China. Ederer, who has extensive experience in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the idea of opening microblogs and blogs in China was largely encouraged by his daughter.



Ederer (right) launches EU delegation's official microblog at a news conference. CFP Photo

He said his 14-year-old daughter advised him days ago that he should try using microblogs — before he gets too old.

Ederer said every month, a new theme will be chosen depending on the events and projects of EU has planned in China. The delegation chose food as its first theme, echoing the visit of the EU agricultural commission and the introduction of its geographic identification system to China.

Also this week, the Danish embassy officially launched its

Sina microblog with a design competition, making Denmark the first Nordic country to launch a microblog in China.

According to a report by China Review News, foreign embassies with microblog sites include the US, Britain, Egypt, France, Greece and Japan. At the recent World Economic Forum, some participating social networking companies pointed out that "microblog diplomacy" has become a new trend in international politics.

Microblog helps strengthen Sino-Japan friendship

By Chu Meng

Hours after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan on March 11, "Japanese earthquake" and "finding lost family" became trending topics on China's most influential microblog services.

Amid the tragedy and devastation, Sino-Japanese ties have been strengthened, especially among the two country's average citizens, said Shigeo Yamada, minister of the Japanese embassy, on China Central Television last Friday.

On Sina's microblog, more than 100 Chinese who were in Japan during the earthquake confirmed they were safe through posted messages. The Red Cross Society of China has for the first time opened an account to receive donations from Chinese for disaster relief.

The China International Search and Rescue Team's microblog has also received lots of traffic, as it

has been posting real-time updates and photos from Japan.

"I was fixated on Japan-related microblogs during the first 10 days because my husband, who is also a Beijinger, works in Tokyo," said Li Yingbo, 29. "My daughter was born there, too, so we have lots of Japanese friends and I worried about them very much."

Hidetoshi Nakata, a former Japanese national team soccer player, traveled to Beijing for five days after the earthquake and opened a microblog on a Chinese website. He is trying to help Japanese students and employees in China find their families in Japan.

He wrote in English: "I am so happy to know that many Chinese people are worried about Japan. Even today there were many interviews from Chinese media, not about football, but about the earthquake and post-disaster rescue in Japan. I want to share this experi-

ence with more people around the world and get together to do something for Japan and the world."

Yoichi Masuzoe, a Japanese senator, also opened a microblog account on Sina and wrote in Chinese: "Japan and China are friends and neighbors. We are close to each other and we are educated by Confucius spirits. Peace is our common will."

Li Yonghui, dean master of the International Relations Department of Beijing Foreign Language University, said that Chinese microblogs, a common platform for the Chinese public to publish opinions of political, economic and international affairs, has functioned to thaw relations between two countries who have had plenty of sticky run-ins in the past year.

"When building good bilateral ties, finding common ground in politics is only one aspect," Li said. "Public diplomacy is essen-



Minister Shigeo Yamada of the Japanese embassy in Beijing. Photo provided by Japanese Embassy

tial. Establishing emotional ties between the two sides can be more important sometimes."

Yamada said public diplomacy is an important part of the country's foreign policy. The silver lining of the natural disaster is that it has brought people together from around the world in a common cause, and hopefully might lead to improved long-term relations between China and Japan.

Bangladesh embassy celebrates 40th anniversary of the country's founding

By Li Zhixin

Bangladesh's National Day was Tuesday, and a ceremony was held at the Bangladesh embassy in Beijing to celebrate the country's 40-year anniversary.

Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad said at the ceremony that Bangladesh has made continued efforts to consolidate democracy, alleviate poverty and attain economic development and a better life for its people since his country's independence.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the present government has been relentlessly striving toward strengthening democracy and rule of law, ensuring good governance and securing the fundamentals for unimpeded economic growth," he said.

He said the country has also worked closely with other nations in the international community to promote peace and stability across the globe.

The ambassador also commented on the healthy state of bilateral relations between his country and China. "China has been a time-tested partner in our unremitting development efforts," he said.

The ambassador said relations between the two countries were strengthened following the successful exchange of visits between the heads of the two countries last year, marking the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

"China has so far constructed six China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridges across different rivers in Bangladesh. The 7th China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridges is under progress," Ahmad said.

He said China has long supported developments in Bangladeshi culture, education, agriculture, tourism, energy, defense, science and technology. The volume of Chinese investment in Bangladesh is on the rise. According to figures released by the Board of Investment of Bangladesh, Chinese investment in Bangladesh reached nearly \$400 million in 2010.

The bilateral trade has surpassed \$7 billion in the last year. "In spite of the worldwide recession, our bilateral trade has not been affected. China has emerged as the biggest source of import for Bangladesh since 2007. Bangladesh ranks as the third biggest export destination for China in the South Asian region," Ahmad said.

Belgium hopes for more culture exchange with China

By Annie Wei

Last week marked the first time that Fadilar Laanan, the Belgium minister of culture, visited China, doing so with the mission of improving cultural trade.

Laanan's visit with a Walloon-Brussels delegate and a small group of entrepreneurs was an extension of last year's EU-China Cultural Forum in Belgium.

Last year, Belgium hosted an

impressive Chinese cultural festival, Laanan said. She hoped her visit to China would result in a culture center in Brussels to promote Chinese culture in Europe. Brussels is one of the top three destinations for international conferences in Europe.

Another focus for Laanan was to set up an agreement between the two countries for further cooperation in the movie and TV industries.

One of the direct benefits from the agreement is that moviemakers can enjoy several tax shelter policies that Belgium provides for its movie industry.

For example, Digital Graphics, an animation production company and one of the visiting Belgium companies, provided its unique graphics technology for an animated film called *Little Big Panda* last year. It was called the most expensive ani-

mation in China, costing 350 million yuan. *Little Big Panda* hit theaters earlier this year.

Dr. IrMarc Ume, technical director from Digital Graphics, said it a successful experience and that they had gained some subsidies for it.

Carole Godfroid, public relations manager of Studio l'Equipe, a company specializing in sound, music and subtitles, just finished a project with a Hong Kong film-

maker on the movie *Hongye*, or *Red Nights*.

"Because there was no agreement between China and Belgium, Hong Kong filmmakers had to choose French companies," Godfroid said.

The delegates said that if a movie and TV cooperation agreement were signed between the two countries, production studios in both countries would benefit.

Contributing to Japanese relief

By Liang Meilan

The 9.0-magnitude earthquake and tsunami that hit north-east Japan on March 11 shook the world in more ways than one.

Millions of people have sent support of some sort to Japan, including many in China, where fundraising events for earthquake relief have been ongoing.

Last Saturday, around 1,200 people gathered at the Belgium embassy for an event called Rescue Japan! A total of 540,000 yuan was raised and given to the Japanese Red Cross Society, which will distribute the money to those in need.

A traditional Japanese dance, opera singing and musical performances livened up the gathering. Items auctioned off included handmade necklaces, wines, foods and antiques, which were on display on bazaar stands scattered in the embassy's backyard.

"The generosity of the participants moved me a lot," said Kosei Murata, wife of the Belgian ambassador to China.

Murata, who is half Japanese, experienced firsthand a magnitude-7.3 earthquake in Hanshin, Japan in 1995.

"Whenever I see news about an earthquake hitting Japan, I remember the disaster I experienced and I cannot help tearing up," Murata said. "I try to assist my fellow citizens every time. So I was thinking that I must do something after the March 11 devastation."

Murata teamed up with the Japanese Women Committee in China. Ritsuko Fukunishi, former president of the committee, played an important role in putting the event together by gathering volunteers and donors.

"The tsunami knocked at the door of my hometown," Fukunishi said with tears in his eyes. "Though the town was luckily not engulfed, the house of my brother's wife in another town closer to the shore was completely damaged. Some of my



The Belgium embassy hosting the event Rescue Japan! in its garden.

Photos by Wei Jianghui



540,000 yuan raised at the event was donated to the Japanese Red Cross Society.

friends and classmates are still listed as missing.

"I hope the tiny help we offer can reduce a certain amount of the victims' pain. I'm really grateful to see so many people offering generous donations whether they're present or not."

Students of Beijing Yew Chung International School donated

50,000 yuan for the relief, all from their allowances.

The public relations volunteer for the event, Yamamoto Tatsuo, CEO of Logras Advertising Company, said this was the biggest gathering of Japanese people in Beijing. "It demonstrates the Japanese people's great sense of unity in response to the disaster," he said.

Yano Koji, a famous Japanese actor based in Changsha, Hunan Province, joined the charity as a volunteer moderator for the auction.

Yoshitsugu Tatsuka, managing director of Japanese fashion and durable daily goods brand Felissimo's Beijing branch, told stories of how Felissimo's employees suffered from the Kobe earthquake 16 years ago.

"Every staff member donated 100 yen each month to support the company during that period. We restarted the project after the March 11 earthquake," Tatsuka said. "Support for the long run is equally significant as donations."

How to help:

Those who want to contribute should visit aruyo.taobao.com and shop for desktop pictures priced from 1 to 5,000 yuan, or email liujinglogras@gmail.com. Money will be sent directly to the Japanese Red Cross Society (info@jrc.or.jp).

Visit bjlogras.com/rj for more information.

Beijing Today advises potential donors to email the Japanese Red Cross to check whether organizations who have a presence in the disaster region are equipped to effectively provide aid. The safest way is to donate is to directly transfer money to Japanese Red Cross's bank account:

Name of Bank: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Name of Branch: Ginza
Account No.: 8047670 (Ordinary Account)
SWIFT Code: SMBC JP JT
Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society
Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN

Event

Learn Qing Ming stories while making pastry

The Fig Tree pastry school will host an event to make a traditional Qing Ming Festival pastry called *zituimo* or *hanyan*. Stories about Qing Ming customs will be told during class.

Where: The Fig Tree, Unit 702, 7/F, Chaowai SOFO, 6B Chaowai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 3, 2-5 pm

Tel: 13910566742

Cost: 250 for a family of 1 to 3 people

Jewelry-making course

The Shou Designers' Academy is known for offering jewelry-making courses from basic to professional and graduate level workshops for more than eight years in Beijing. Its weekend course led by Denise Chong-Lewis happens every Saturday, teaching how to make simple everyday jewelry for work or special evening occasions.

Where: Jamaica Blue Cafe, Shop 115 Park Avenue, 6 Chaoyanggongyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Saturday, 2-5 pm

Email:

deniseinbeijing@gmail.com

Cost: 500 yuan per workshop

Booktalk: How China changed the world

Gavin Menzies, the famous British submarine commander and author, will talk about his book *1434: The Year a Magnificent Chinese Fleet Sailed to Italy and Ignited the Renaissance*. Menzies will also introduce his ongoing research and his experiences.

Where: The Bookworm, The First Courtyard, Hegezhuang Village, Shunyi District

When: April 1, 6:30-8 pm

Tel: 6431 2108

Cost: 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students

(By Liang Meilan)

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Tight measures for illegal parking begin today



People who park at CBD, East Third Ring Road and subway entrances will be ticketed or have their vehicles towed.

Liu Dongjia/CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

Starting April 1, strong measures will be taken against illegal parking in the central business district (CBD), East Third Ring Road and subway entrances. People who park at the above areas should be aware of new policies and regulations.

Violators will be ticketed or have their vehicles towed. The tightened measures will last for six months.

According to the plan, the local government will eradicate illegal parking around CBD and Chaoyang District by the end

of the month. Similar measures will be taken along Chaoyangmen Wai Avenue and the areas around Asian Sports Village and Olympic Village in May.

The traffic control department said it would strengthen penalties to those who park illegally and ban all illegal parking lots.

All employees working in regulated parking lots will wear uniforms. Parking lots will be equipped with a unified toll system. People who are ticketed can call 6730 1616 to dispute their charge.

According to new regulations,

parking at the entrance of subways and areas around office buildings for more than half an hour will warrant a ticket.

The side road of East Third Ring Road, CBD areas and areas around Chang'an Avenue will be equipped with cameras that automatically take pictures of cars that are illegally parked. Signs will be erected in the above areas to warn drivers.

The Chaoyang District governor said a bureau will conduct a general survey on the parking places around residential communities. They are also considering a

privilege program for people who park around residential areas to relieve parking difficulties.

Chaoyang District will also consider making more space for people parking in communities, such as building temporary parking lots and changing the roads inside the communities into one-way roads to save space for parking.

At the end of April, the local government will test an electric toll collection system in three places in Chaoyang District, including Dongdaqiao near Third Ring Road. The system will be popularized in other areas later this year.

Experiencing the world without sight

By Zhao Hongyi

A bridge, a stream; trees along cobblestone roads; shelves of books, stacks of newspapers, rack of grapes.

These items, for most people, are insignificant and barely worth a second thought on most days. But force someone to identify these things without the benefit of sight, and suddenly the experience changes.

The first "blind experience hall," which opened in Beijing this week, is giving visitors a different perspective on their everyday world. The space is decorated with all these items mentioned above, but you have to use your sense of touch to enjoy them.

"The reason we opened this hall is to give people the experience of sensing their world in a completely different way," said Ma Lirong, a staff member in the hall. "We also want them to experience the difficulties that the blind face every day."

Visitors are led through a series



The blind experience hall at Workers Stadium

CFP Photo

of sensations and asked to identify what they feel. When visitors enter a final hall, Ma tells them, "Now we have arrived in a cafe." She has everyone try to find a seat and try to order a drink.

Ma believes that after people have gone through the blind experience,

they will focus more on the smaller things in life that they might have taken for granted before, and forget trivial concerns and minor problems.

The staff members at the project are all actually blind. "One of the purposes of this project

is to help the blind find jobs and demonstrate their abilities," Ma, who herself is blind, said.

Only a third of the blind experience hall has opened so far, Ma said. "We'll open the rest gradually and upgrade the environment and facilities here," she said.

Most of the revenue from ticket sales go to helping orphans and the disabled. The hall will hold regular charity programs in the future, including lectures delivered by visiting professors.

The blind experience hall

Cost: 120 yuan

Open: 9:30 am - 6 pm, booking available for special times

Where: underground floor, north entrance, Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

How to get there: Take bus 9, 113, 115, 118, 9, 758 or Te2 to Gongren Tiyuguan stop, or take subway to Dongsishitiao station and walk east for 500 meters.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

As spring is here, I'm thinking about a family outing and want to take some photos of my 1-year-old girl. Can you recommend places in and around Beijing?

With the onset of the flower blossoming season, it's ideal to visit gardens around town. Below is a list of places that offer the best view of flowering trees.

Cherry blossoms at Yuyuantan Park

Cost: 3 yuan

How to get there: Take bus 114, 300 or 717 to Yuyuantan Gongyuan

Peach blossoms at Beijing Botanical Gardens

Cost: 10 yuan

How to get there: Take bus 318, 714 or 904 to Beijing Zhiwuyuan

Pinggu Liujiaxiang

Cost: 15-40 yuan, depending on the site

How to get there: Take Bus 918 from Dongzhimen stop, then transfer to minibus 6 at Guanzhuang Lukou

Cloves at Jietai Temple

Cost: 10 yuan

How to get there: Take luyou or Travel Bus 7 from Qianmen to the Jietai Temple stop. Alternatively, take Subway Line 1 to Pingguoyuan station, then take bus 931 to the destination.

Are there any stores in Beijing that sell beads for necklace making? I'm looking for small ceramic beads with letters and designs. And necklace strings and fasteners. Also, I would like to bulk order custom design beads.

The upper floors of both Yashow Market and Silk Street have fake pearls and all other kinds of jewelry. There are tons of ready-made jewelry. You can also find some stores in Nanluogu Xiang.

Yashow Market

Where: 9 Gongrentiyuchang Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6416 8945

Silk Street

Where: 8 Xiushui Dongjie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5169 9003

I am looking for a place to study on the weekends - something like a library that's walking distance from Chaoyang Park. Any place I can stay all day?

Try the Chaoyang District Library, which is near the park. You can stay there as long as it is open: from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 9 pm; on Saturday and Sunday, 9 am to 7 pm.

Where: 17 Jintai Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8599 2780

Web site: cylib.cn

(By Liang Meilan)

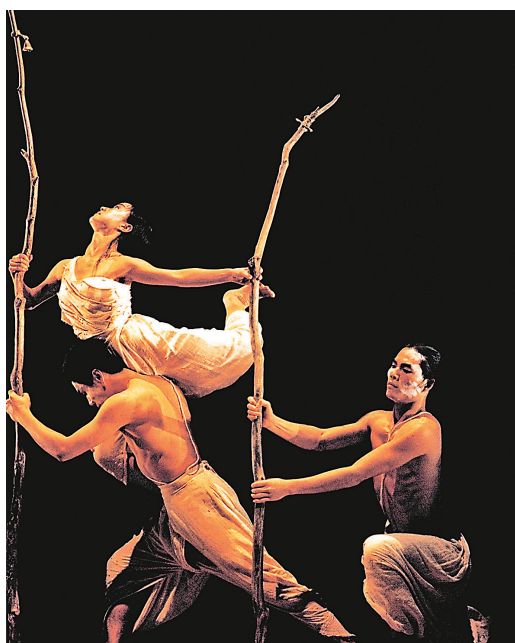
By He Jianwei

"Dance may leave you a beggar," Lin Hwai-min's father warned when he left to found Cloud Gate Dance Theater in 1973.

Lin knew well the difficulties involved in running a modern dance company. He had read the diaries of the maestros Martha Graham and George Balanchine, both of whom saw their companies disbanded and rebuilt many times over.

But for 38 years, Lin has kept Cloud Gate open and brought it fame in Asia, Europe and the US.

A trip to India in 1994 was a turning point, and inspired him to send his dancers in a new direction. This weekend, Lin will bring the company-changing dance *Songs of the Wanderers* to Beijing's stage for the first time.



Everything began with a journey to Bodh Gaya, the religious site where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under a bodhi tree.

Lin was familiar with the story, and from the early 1990s was consumed by a powerful urge to make a trip to Bodh Gaya. In the summer of 1994, he booked a ticket and flew there with a copy of Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* tucked into his bag.

Upon arriving in India, he was shocked by the sights. "You see everything about India at once on its streets – birth, aging, sickness and death," Lin said last Thursday at the National Center for the Performing Arts. "I cried almost every day."

One night while in a village's train station, he stepped on something soft. Feeling around, he discovered the form belonged to a man who had passed out on the ground. The entire waiting room was full of sleeping bodies.

"I burst into tears. I didn't know how a person could be so fatigued as to be undisturbed when someone stepped on him," he said.

Bodh Gaya is a village connected to the world by a lone muddy path. Its small shops and open-air stalls are collected in a small market around Mahabodhi Temple, a refuge of beggars. "If I gave pennies to one beggar, 30 more would reach out their hands," he said.

Its streets were also home to lepers whose bodies were being devoured alive by flies. "I couldn't understand and was even annoyed that people were still suffering like this more than 2,500 years after the Buddha found nirvana," he said.

In the afternoons, he sat at the banks of the Neranjra River staring at its muddy, motionless water. Reading Hesse's novel, Lin imagined Prince Siddhartha saw the river flowing the same way as he lived on a diet of sesame seeds and a grain of wheat, becoming as frail as a wraith before realizing the desire to be enlightened was the biggest barrier to enlightenment.

Lin sat quietly under the bodhi tree with the monks. "I opened my eyes and saw sunshine coming from the top of the temple through the branches and landing directly on my forehead," he said. "My heart welled up with joy; I felt a quietude that I had never experienced."

After returning to Taipei, he thought often about the river and the tree. He began requiring his dancers to meditate every day for the next two months. Men dozed off during meditation as a silent protest against the strange training, but Lin let them sleep.

A month later, many of the dancers became less irritable. "After that I asked them to study tai chi and calligraphy, and gradually, their skill set became different from other dancers," Lin said.

To harness these new skills, he created *Songs of the Wanderers*. It demanded amazing technique, a low center of gravity, and the ability to breathe and walk silently.

Three tons of golden rice is the only prop on stage. Sometimes, it represents rivers and mountains; sometimes it is rain falling on the dancers. They push it, throw it, roll it and play with it.

The 90-minute dance has no plot. In one 25-minute scene that moved American and European viewers to tears, the dancers raked the rice in concentric circles. "I couldn't understand why they cried, but everything has a reason. Perhaps for them, this scene was a release from depression – as though it were peeling away onion-like layers from the heart."

To keep the dance as part of its repertoire while on a world tour, Cloud Gate opened several warehouses to store the grain. The grains must be baked in the sun in order not to germinate and dyed gold.

The biggest challenge in each performance is transporting and storing the grain. At an open-air performance in the US, squirrels attacked the stage trying to eat the grain. In Russia, officials banned the grain from entering the country, so the company had to collect new grain from the Caspian Sea region and spend several days baking and dyeing it.

The grain being used in Beijing has been shipped from Cloud Gate's headquarters in Taipei.

For Lin, the choreography of this dance came easy. The music, however, was as difficult as finding enlightenment.

As the date of the first performance drew near, Lin was unable to settle on a song. By chance, one of his friends gave him a tape of Georgian folk songs sung by Rustavi Choir. "It was a weathered but warm voice. I knew I had found the sound," he said.

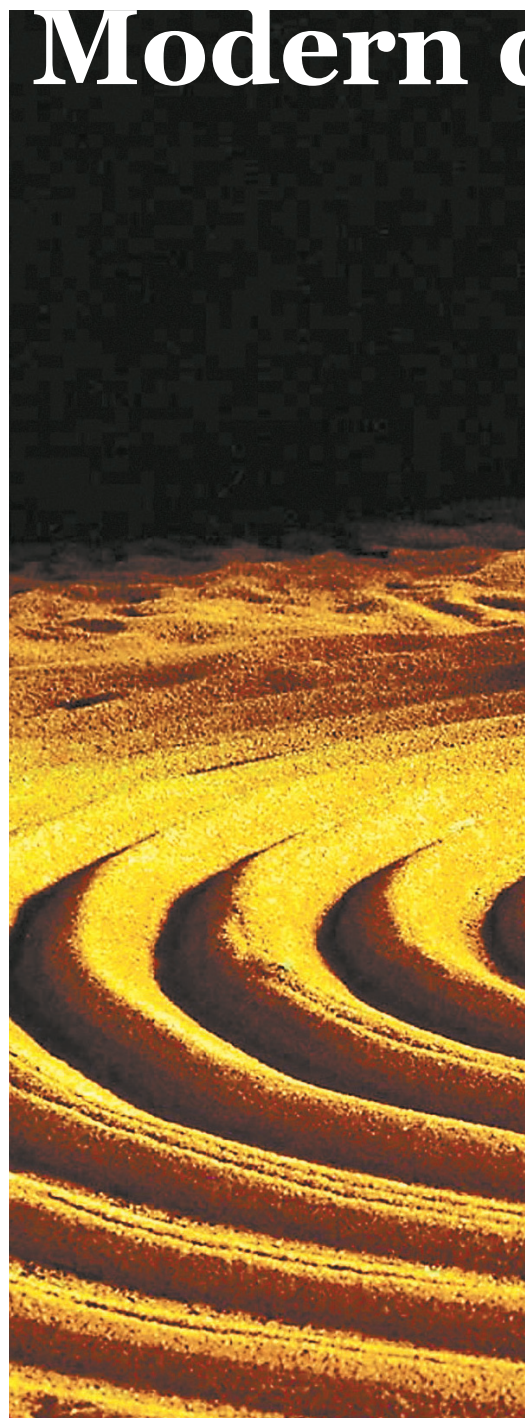
But the cassette was plagued by noise that no studio could remove. A hunt began in New York and Moscow for the original album. On the day before he left New York, Lin phoned a Russian bookstore. An elderly woman answered the phone and asked him to hold while she looked.

The call became more expensive as she looked for five minutes, and then 10. Soon 20 minutes had passed and she returned to the phone. "I thought I heard a voice from the heavens as she told me her store had one copy left," Lin said.

Since its debut in 1994, the company has performed *Songs of the Wanderers* more than 160 times. It is Cloud Gate's most frequently performed dance, having been performed at the Greek ancient theater, Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, New York's Next Wave Festival and Norway's Bergen International Festival.

Quest

Modern



Lin Hwai-min creates *Songs of the Wanderers* drawing



t for quiet

dance based on a novel and a trip



13

Center stage



g inspiration from a journey to Bodh Gaya.

Photos provided by NCPA

‘I couldn’t understand why they cried, but everything has a reason. Perhaps for them, this scene was a release from depression – as though it were peeling away onion-like layers from the heart.’

‘I opened my eyes and saw sunshine coming from the top of the temple through the branches and landing directly on my forehead. My heart swelled up with joy; I felt a quietude that I had never experienced.’



Songs of the Wanderers

Presented by Cloud Gate Dance Theater
Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: April 1-2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

BEIJING TODAY

Editor: He Jianwei Designer: Yang Gen

The bond between man and bonobo

By He Jianwei

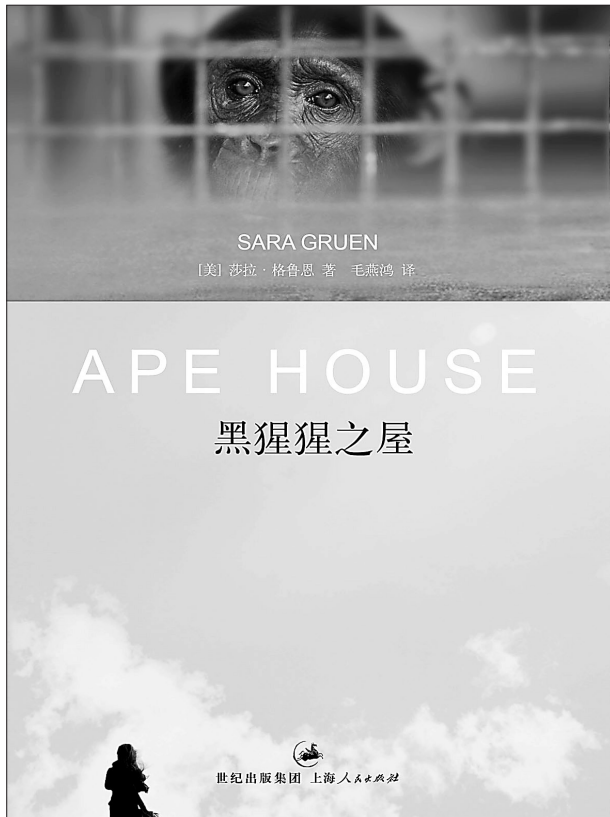
Jack London discussed the bonds between the domesticated dog and the wolf in *The Call of the Wild* in 1903. Now more than a century later, Sara Gruen explores the bond between humans and our closest cousins in her fourth novel, *Ape House*.

The book's six bonobo chimpanzees live in the Great Ape Language Lab with scientist Isabel Duncan. The oldest male, Sam, is a charismatic leader; Jeloni, an adolescent male, likes to show off; Makena is pregnant and fond of Jeloni; the baby Lola likes to tease; and Mbongo is the smallest and most sensitive of the males.

Like others of their species, the six are capable of reason and having deep relationships. Unlike most bonobos, they know American Sign Language.

The scientist Duncan does not understand humans and feels more comfortable around the bonobos. "Over the years, they have become more human, and I have become more bonobo," Duncan says to the tabloid reporter John Thigpen, who plans to write about the developments of her lab to quell the fury of animal rights protesters.

When terrorists bomb the lab, Duncan survives but is severely disfigured. To avoid further attacks, the lab sells off the bonobos to a por-



Ape House

By Sara Gruen, 376pp, Shanghai People's Press, 28 yuan

nographic reality TV show called "Ape House."

Millions of viewers become fans, watching as the animals order take-out and fornicate on screen. It is said among animals, only humans, dolphins and bonobos have rec-

reational sex; bonobos also share 98.7 percent of their DNA with humans.

To save the animals, Duncan must face the pornographer, the producer of the show, the radical protesters and the greedy tabloid reporter.

While writing the book, Gruen visited the Great Ape Trust in Des Moines, Iowa, which studies language acquisition and cognition in great apes. She also studied linguistics at Toronto's York University.

Most of the conversations between bonobos and humans are based on actual conversations in the Great Ape Trust, and most of the ape-based scenes are based on observed events.

As the author of the best-selling novel *Water for Elephants*, soon to be a motion picture starring Reese Witherspoon and Robert Pattinson, Gruen lives in North Carolina with her husband, three children, four cats, two dogs, two horses and a goat.

All of her novels feature animals. In *Water for Elephants*, Rosie, an elephant in a Depression-era circus, witnesses a love between two people that overcomes incredible odds. The book has sold 1.2 million copies and remained the No. 1 bestseller on *The New York Times*' list for 68 weeks.

Many publishers eagerly sought a follow-up. Spiegel & Grau, a division of Random House, bought the publication rights to *Ape House* for \$5 million (33 million yuan) after reading only 12 pages.

Shanghai People's Press owns the publication rights on the mainland and printed its Chinese version last month.

A black writer who models himself after jazz musicians

By Charles Zhu

When *The Cross of Redemption*, the uncollected works of James Baldwin, was published, the world was given another chance to understand one of the most important black writers in American literature.

The posthumous collection includes book reviews, speeches, essays, forewords and letters, and explains Baldwin's ideas through an artist's eye.

In the first essay, "Mass Culture and the Creative Artist," Baldwin holds that the acquisition of art or artistic experiences has become more sought after than the information or experience itself. He was critical of the money-driven mass media and its consumers.

"The people who run the mass media and those who consume it are really in the same boat," wrote Baldwin. "They must continue to produce things they do not really admire, still less love, in order to continue buying things they do not really want, still less need."

A gay black man born

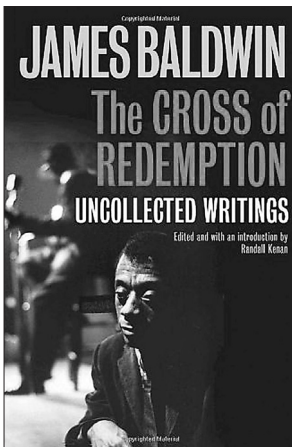
into an impoverished pre-Civil Rights-era Harlem, Baldwin was a street preacher before moving on to the secular world of fiction. The experience gave him the tools needed to analyze and attack his marginalized social status.

In this new collection, he takes on blacks, whites and both the rich and poor.

Like Martin Luther King Jr, Baldwin shifted his focus from racism to the questions of economy and class. This can clearly be seen in writings where he uses "the Negro problem" to frame American attraction to empty consumerism and violence.

When he learned Norman Mailer was running for the mayor of New York in early 1961, he did not believe it and thought it was a joke. When it proved true, he was furious that Mailer was abandoning his calling.

However, in the ensuing several years, the author of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room* himself became profoundly merged with the civil rights movement as its spokesman. He spoke of



The Cross of Redemption
By James Baldwin, 336pp, Pantheon, \$26.95

the American system in Washington in November of 1963, "Americans are the youngest country, the largest country, and the strongest country, we like to say, and yet the very notion of change, real change, throws Americans into a panic."

In Baldwin's fiction and essays, he was fairly concerned with the economic, political and

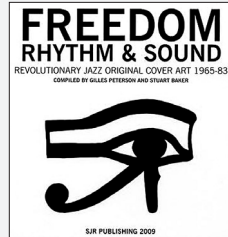
cultural injustice in American society. Speaking to a predominantly white audience, he said, "There is nothing you can do for me. There is nothing you can do for Negroes." However, he was fairly pessimistic about the all-inclusive white generation. The whites in his mind were "beyond any conceivable hope of moral rehabilitation." On the other hand, he sensationally urged Negroes to "render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber."

It is eerie to read Baldwin's incredulity at Robert F. Kennedy's prediction that the US would one day have a black president – and eerier still when that president is still in office. Baldwin seemed offended at the idea that a black man could or would want to become the helmsman of a country he viewed as being in moral free fall.

In Baldwin's philosophy, art is a liberating force like love. He refers often to jazz, and blues serves as part of his fiction's left motif. He once said in 1962, "I think I really helplessly model myself on jazz musicians."

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.



Freedom, Rhythm and Sound

By Gilles Peterson and Stuart Baker, 180pp, Soul Jazz Records Publishing, \$39.95

The momentum of the 1960s civil rights movement, the explosion of rock and the underground press of the decade had an amazing effect on jazz, both musically and culturally. Years before punk, musicians like John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, Sun Ra, Don Cherry and The Art Ensemble of Chicago took control of their work by recording, releasing and distributing their music in runs fewer than 500 copies. This book is a collection of cover artwork from this revolutionary era in jazz from 1965 to 1980.



The Flesh and the Spirit

By Sally Mann, 204pp, Aperture, \$55

This is the first in-depth exploration of artist Sally Mann's approach to the body. Throughout her career, Mann has fearlessly pushed exploration of the human form, tackling often difficult subject matter and making unapologetically sensual images that are both bold and lyrical. This book includes Mann's earliest platinum prints from the late 1970s, Polaroid still life, early color work of her children, haunting landscapes, recent self-portraits and nude studies of her husband.



Visible Signs

By David Crow, 192pp, AVA Publishing, \$39.95

Semiotics – the study of signs and sign systems – has become part of the curriculum of most art schools. This accessible, visually outstanding introduction strikes the perfect balance between theory and practice. By examining text and image in advertising, as well as "high art" versus "popular culture," it reveals the difference between signs and signifiers.

(By He Jianwei)

Speech group brings stodgy professors out of their shells

By Chu Meng

Apple fans are obsessed with the chic designs and cutting-edge technology featured in the company's i-series. But the 20-minute pre-launch presentations by Steve Jobs probably do more to sell the products than any of the technology inside.

In China, one group is working to similarly package the knowledge of Chinese scholars and rip away their rigid academic theory to present their findings in an easily-digested Jobsian package. Their goal is nothing less achievable than making science part of mainstream pop.

Nutshell Time, called "Guokr" for their Chinese pronunciation of "nutshell," is an NGO promoting science and technology education. They attempt to bring academic theory to the masses through easily understood talks and free online shows.



Nutshell member are like publicists for genius professors.

Breaking shells

Nutshell Time was formed last May to promote Chinese popular science to the masses. For a two-hour marathon of ideas, the founders invited speakers from the sciences to come and discuss their latest theories for a maximum of 20 minutes.

But speeches were not enough: participants also had to give a demo during the presentation.

The first talk brought together some of the hottest scientific developments affecting the world. Since then, the group has held six talks in Beijing and Shanghai on topics like health and green technology.

The health talks, held in January, brought together specialists working in ophthalmology, rehabilitation, clinical medicine and psychology.

"Today, young Chinese scientists, writers and artists can hardly escape the nutshell of the city. Nutshell Time offers them a chance to break out of that and talk about the universe and science. It's a chance to think beyond the limits," said Tian Chen, one of the founders of the group.

Led by their slogan, "Say hello to the future," the group believes in freeing the country's top minds to inspire the scientists of tomorrow with their

amazing talks. So far, the events have been an amazing success.

Inspired by TED

After a busy day of visiting professors and business celebrities, Tian still spoke energetically at 10 pm.

Tian is 35 years old, and many of her partners in Nutshell Time are of a similar age. But the energy of their brainstorming sessions makes it easy to mistake them for younger students.

But students are not the Nutshell members.

Most members completed their post-graduate degrees abroad and have years of experience working in the media or creative fields.

Tian, a graduate of a business administration program, had a long and successful career in marketing and computer advertisement design before joining Nutshell.

"We shared one common interest when we first got together: we all loved TED. We love talking about scientific topics even though we are not scientists, and we love sharing wild ideas related to science and technology," she said.

Of course, that may not have been their only common interest. Many of the founding members of Nutshell were part of the Science Squirrels, a

group of science reporters, researchers and students organized by Ji Shisan, one of the Nutshell founders.

But the Nutshells and the Squirrels are very different groups managed as separate NGOs under the Ministry of Civil Affairs' non-profit group Hasai Communication.

"Great minds think alike," said Ju Zi, a Nutshell member who joined days after returning from finishing his Ph.D degree in the US. "TED has been going on in the US for more than 40 years. Scholars are proud to be invited to speak at TED presentations, and their speeches help attract financial support for their studies."

TED is an abbreviation for Technology, Education and Design. The group's 2011 convention, which began March 1, offered 50 presentations over four days. Seats at the live show sold for \$6,000, but recordings of the presentations were made available online for free.

"TED has a great formula. But many Chinese scholars in various fields are doing great studies that are changing the future. It is a huge loss for all of us if their great theories are being glossed over," Ju Zi said.

Nutshell has become TED's de facto counterpart in China.

After two test events last May and July, the group made its debut presentation on November 14 at the China National Convention Center.

Working as scholar scouts

On Wednesday, Tian and her partners finished their sixth presentation in Shanghai.

Nutshell works much like a publicist.

Two out of the six full-time members call themselves "scholar scouts." They hunt the top schools to find professors and academic groups with a message worth spreading to the whole country. Another two work as agents, making the necessary connections and discussing relevant topics. The agent's most important job is convincing stuffy academicians to shelve their scholar speak and clearly communicate their achievements to a big audience.

"Back and forth discussion with the professors is essential. We always try to help them find easy metaphors to make their theories understandable and interesting. We show them videos of TED to teach them about body language and poise. They need to speak without notes for 20 minutes, and that is a huge challenge for Chinese professors," Tian said.

The last two members work as visual agents who help the professors create graphic visuals. They also create animations to assist in explaining the theories and amuse listeners.

"Sometimes, they have also to help professors to add some light-hearted jokes to their speeches like every great talker," Tian said.

In the end, most of the professors are very happy that their theories can be accepted by so many people.

Tian said the group's long-term goal is to find a way to package these new academic theories to bring real benefit to the country and its people.

"More and more elite businessmen and investors are attending our presentations, either as speakers or listeners. They might walk away with the spark needed to apply these theories to business," she said.

Photos provided by Chen Yun



Unique pieces for home decor



Zhang Dongmei, designer and CEO of Dian Nou Home Furnishing

By Annie Wei

Building 10 in Beijing Garden Technology Institute, close to the China Academy of Fine Arts, is home to a cluster of small design companies that hold exhibitions and sell sculptures, advertising and pieces for interior decorating.

Zhang Dongmei, 38, created Beijing Dian Nou Home Furnishing five years ago. Her main clients are well-off customers who want matching home pieces, from chairs and tables to bed sheets to vases and even the type of flowers that should go in them.

It was difficult starting a company, but business has been steady, Zhang said.

Most of the pieces she selects for her customers are quite different from those one might find at IKEA. She works with independent furniture suppliers and factories, and she has a workroom with three workers who produce curtains and pillows.

"These products are not available in the mass market," Zhang said.

"Some customers are very clear about what they want," she said.

But she also cited the counter-example of an older man who wanted to decorate his son's villa. "The customer is old-school, so he asked me to pick out things for his son, who likes the modern lifestyle."

Zhang ended up selecting green ceramic frogs and lotus leaves to put in the bathroom, giving the bathtub the feel of an outdoor pool.

Zhang's company also designs and makes customized furniture. All furniture can be returned for maintenance, she said.

The season's latest pieces are a blue and yellow crystal balled vase (2,200 to 2,800 yuan), leather wrapped handle tray (1,800 yuan) and customized chair (starting from 13,000 yuan).

Beijing Dian Nou Home Furnishing

Where: 1st floor, Building 10, Yuanlin Kexue Yanjiusuo, 7 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Wangjing, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 6 pm

Tel: 8472 2400

Website: bjdiannuo.com



Flower wall decor, priced to be determined



Customized furniture, 13,000 to 61,000 yuan



Silver tray, price to be determined



Wall holder, 358 to 850 yuan



Bejeweled vase, 605 yuan; candle holder, 310 yuan



Leather-wrapped handle tray, price to be determined



Candle holder, 1,585 yuan

Photos provided by Zhang Dongmei

By Chu Meng

Sweets like cupcakes, pies and ice cream have become popular topics among Chinese food publications. *Beijing Today* recommends four quality stores.

Pastries and ice cream to satisfy the sweet tooth



Vanilla ice cream, 46 yuan

Photo provided by Movenpick

Swiss royalty ice cream

Brightly colored balls of ice cream with emblem-fine texture and natural ingredients are the special qualities of Movenpick ice cream. Created in Switzerland, the ice cream is known for never using any artificial additives. It is famous for being served at royal banquets in several European countries; for the first decade of the ice cream's existence, in fact, it was produced only for restaurant sales.

Movenpick's new Beijing chain store just opened in Chaoyang Joy City in February. The price is predictably high – a single ball of ice cream sells for 46 yuan – but that's what one pays for royal taste.

Just as an example, the Swiss chocolate ice cream uses cocoa from Venezuelan Maracay Bo District, the birthplace of the world's first cocoa. The ice cream ball is a decadent combination of sculpture-like Swiss chocolate chips and creamy chocolate ice cream.

The maple walnut also has a gorgeous taste, with a ripple of maple syrup down the middle and crunchy caramelized walnuts mixed in.

Movenpick Ice Cream

Where: 6th floor, Chaoyang Joy City, 101 Chaoyang Bei Li, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8552 0901

Ice cream from New Zealand



Photo provided by New Zealand Natural

New Zealand ice cream is fresh and natural; try scoops or it or have the store make you a sundae. New Zealand Natural has several stores around Beijing, with service that is friendly, polite and efficient.

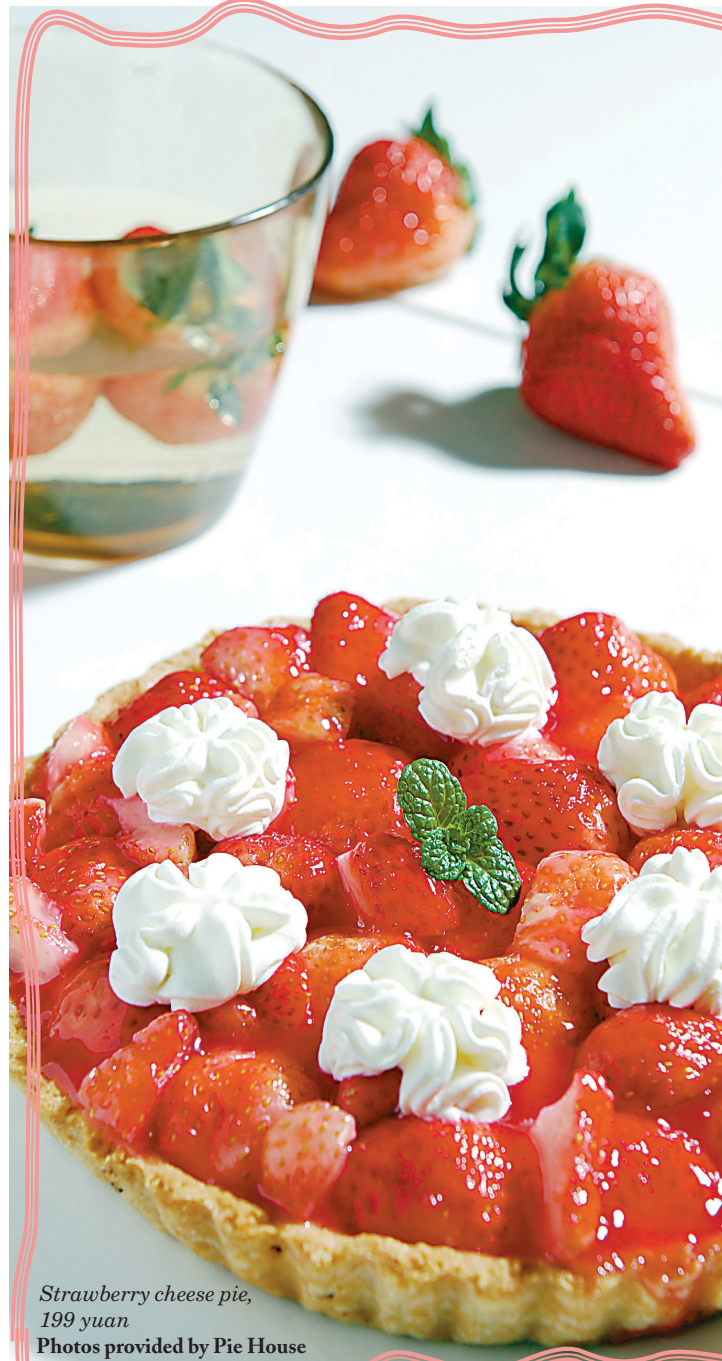
Generally speaking, the ice cream is a bit pricey, but it's easy to get addicted to its sweet and smooth flavor. The store recently rolled out family-size ice cream boxes (78 yuan) with raspberry and white chocolate flavors.

New Zealand Natural

Where: Store 3, B1/F, Zhonguancun Carrefour Shopping Center, Haidian District.

Open: 8:30 am – 10 pm

Tel: 5172 1522



Strawberry cheese pie, 199 yuan

Photos provided by Pie House



Blueberry cheese cake, starting from 200 yuan

Authentic American pie

Pie, that all-American treat, is eaten all over the world, but it has not yet gained traction in Beijing. Pie House, with authentic American pies, hopes to change that.

Pie House is the only made-to-order pie baker in the city. It receives orders online and delivers its products. One can order tartlets or pies that serve up to 10 people. Customers can mix-and-match different flavors.

Strawberry tartlets are 169 yuan for 20 pieces. On a cream pudding base in a flaky pate brisee are strawberry, peach and kiwi. These go great during afternoon tea or coffee breaks.

The 9-inch strawberry cheese pie (199 yuan) is the bakery's best-selling pie, perfect for birthdays and other occasions. A golden flaky crust covered in dark French chocolate makes a delicious black bottom for this pie. On top of that, a layer of sweetened cream cheese and fresh strawberries are decorated with swirls of fresh whipped cream.

Pie House

Website: piehouse.com.cn

Ordering hours: 9 am – 9 pm (order 5 hours in advance); free delivery within Fourth Ring Road

Tel: 5166 4464

Special European dessert at Hi My Sweetheart

Hidden in Wudaoying Hutong, a teeny-weeny European home-style hole-in-the-wall called Hi My Sweetheart is popular for its relaxed atmosphere and Charlotte Russe – an aged but authentic European cold dessert invented by French chef Marie Antoine Carême (1784–1833), it features Bavarian cream set in a mold lined with ladyfingers.

The store, with a comfortable lattice-pattern couch, paintings on the wall and toys scattered about, can only house about a dozen visitors at a time. It was opened by Elisa Cui, 27, and Lily Wang, 30, last winter.

Cui and Wang spent many weekends searching for quality desserts around the city before quitting their jobs to take lessons from a Hong Kong baking master.

When they began their first business, "We never calculated everything like profits and costs. We simply wanted to extend our interests and find a way to do this as a career," Cui said.

She said they have been lucky, as their first try at business has been successful so far. These two easygoing and talkative bakers are getting triple the business they did when they first started.

A tourist from Paris, after ordering a Vienna quark cheesecake (18 yuan) and Charlotte Russe (18 yuan), asked Cui whether she has been to Europe, because the atmosphere of their shop was exactly the same as coffee shops there.

Charlotte Russe at Hi My Sweetheart tastes light, sweet and creamy but never greasy. Only 10 of these delicacies are served every day. If you're not lucky enough to try one, the tiramisu (25 yuan) and chocolate mousse (18 yuan) are also good.

Hi My Sweetheart

Where: 78 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: noon – 8 pm

Tel: 6404 5084



Cupcake, 18 yuan



Inside Hi My Sweetheart

Photos by Liu Yan

From jazz to Irish music

By He Jianwei

Drawing from its rich repertoire of Irish songs, Blackwater is a band of international musicians based in Beijing that was founded last year.

Singer Desmond McGarry is Irish-Canadian, guitarist Daniel Brustman hails from the US, accordionist Zoe Wang is from China and Nico Torrese on tenor banjo and mandolin is from France.

The band released its self-titled debut album last year, which features 16 songs from ballads to frenzied jigs and reels. It played in a concert in front of Ireland's President Mary McAleese last June.

The band originally consisted of just two members: Brustman and Torrese, who met in Beijing in 2004. They adapted famous guitarist Django Reinhardt's repertoire and began performing in pubs.

In 2007, Brustman and Torrese teamed up with Wang, who studied French accordion style in France, to form No Name.

Two years later, No Name became a quartet when German bassist Sebastian Meyer joined to inject some jazz and pop to the band.

That band's debut album, *Here & There*, released last July, features the music styles

of gypsy jazz, French chanson, swing and tango.

When Meyer left the band, McGarry came and gave the band an Irish element.

Born in Dublin, McGarry spent most of his life in Canada. He comes from a musical family and since childhood has been singing Irish music, in pubs, at parties, on street corners and wherever else people would stop and listen.

Since arriving in Beijing, he has performed Irish music both as a solo artist and in bands. He was also the lead singer of Black Cat Bone, a blues band.

On April 9, Blackwater will perform Irish traditional music at the National Library Concert Hall, including *The Limerick Rake*, *The Foggy Dew*, *Wild Rover* and *Heather Breeze*.

Songs from the Emerald Isle

Where: National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 9, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80, 120, 180, 280, 380 yuan

Tel: 6848 5462, 8854 5520

Nightlife

Christophe Lier Trio

Jazz pianist Lier performs with bassist Dazhong and drummer Nicolas Meges.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 7, 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

Stage in May

Concert

Anne-Sophie Mutter Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,080 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Peter Ritzen Piano Recital

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Les Petits Chanteurs de Saint-Marc Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: April 8, 2 pm and 7:30 pm
Admission: 60-580 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Piotr Anderszewski Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 28, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Offering / Fragrance presented by Beijing Modern Dance Company

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 18-19, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Butterfly Metamorphosis

Where: Fengchao Theater, 200 meters east of Oriental Ginza, 12 Shizipo, Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 3-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-200 yuan
Tel: 8836 8265

He and His Two Wives

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Opera

Puccini's Opera: Tosca

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 12-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-800 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)



5 Friday, April 1

Movie Memories of Matsuko (2006)

Matsuko was a school teacher in 1970s, whose life becomes terrible when she took a blame for a student committing a theft.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

You Fool Me

Five bands – Velvet Road, Multi-Ego, Troublemaker, K362 and New Tank – rock tonight.

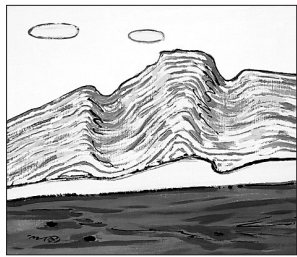
Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 5205 1112

Exhibition Art of Daily Life – Documentation Exhibition of Zhang Liguang Since 2000

Since Zhang retired from the Art School of Tsinghua University in 2000, he has had more time to create paintings of daily life and memories of childhood.

Where: CU Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 15, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9576



6 Saturday, April 2

Movie Red Light Revolution (2010)

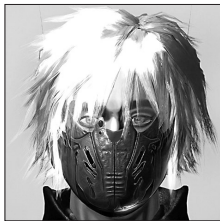
This indie film tells the story of an ordinary Beijinger

who opens an adult shop to make ends meet, sparking a sexual revolution in his conservative neighborhood.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 4 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269

Exhibition



A Grain of Sand – Liu Zhiyi Solo Exhibition

Liu blends cartoons with traditional Chinese ink and wash paintings.

Where: PIFO New Art Studios, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 24, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9562

Nightlife



Binkabi

This band from Ghana plays original Ghana music known as High Life Music, Afrobeat jazz and Afro funk blended with rock and reggae.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door
Tel: 6401 4611

Sunday, April 3

Exhibition Winding – Li Wei's Solo Exhibition

Li paints landscapes and scenes, such as bamboo and the corners of buildings, that are usually ignored or overlooked by urbanites.

Where: Beyond Art Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 30, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9561

Nightlife A Tribute to Kurt Cobain

The local band The Gray pays tribute to Kurt Cobain, the legendary Nirvana lead singer who was found dead of a shotgun wound with a suicide note in his Seattle home 17 years ago.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

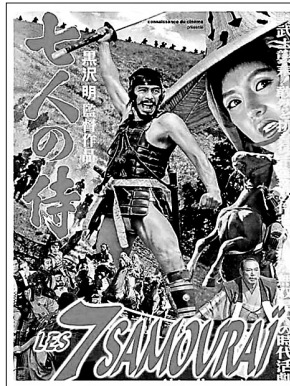
When: 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan

Movie Seven Samurai (1954)

Directed by Japanese master Akira Kurosawa, this film tells the story of a village of farmers who hire seven samurai to combat bandits.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 6:30 pm
Admission: 25 yuan, including soft drink and popcorn
Tel: 8404 4166

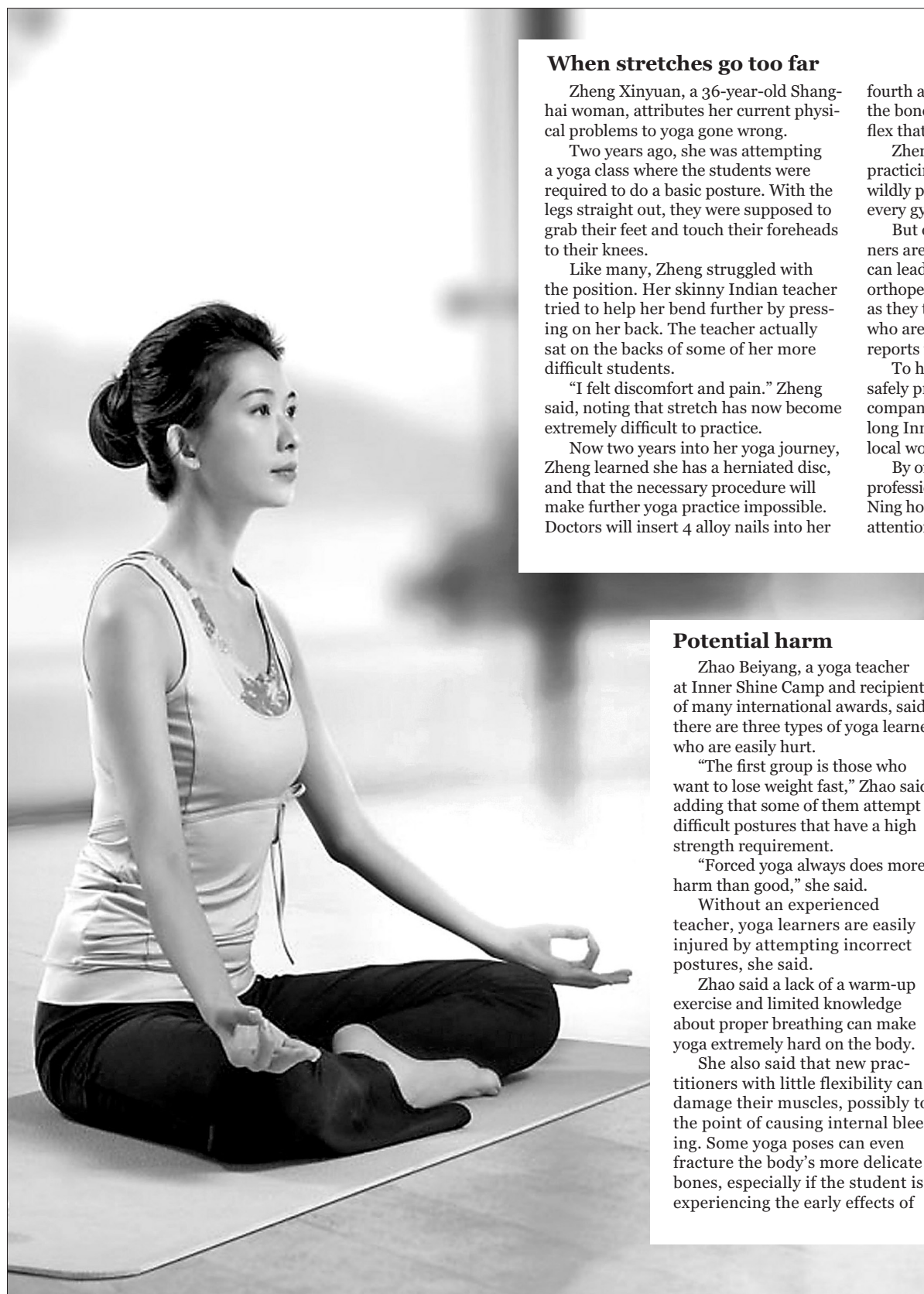


Get into spring shape with yoga

By Han Manman

Spring is coming, and with it a return to networking events, parties and special workshops. But confidence may be hard to come by if you've been packing on the pounds all winter.

Many people turn to gym-based yoga programs to lose fat, regain flexibility and tighten skin. Although the Indian exercise has a reputation for being gentle on the body, injuries still happen.



When stretches go too far

Zheng Xinyuan, a 36-year-old Shanghai woman, attributes her current physical problems to yoga gone wrong.

Two years ago, she was attempting a yoga class where the students were required to do a basic posture. With the legs straight out, they were supposed to grab their feet and touch their foreheads to their knees.

Like many, Zheng struggled with the position. Her skinny Indian teacher tried to help her bend further by pressing on her back. The teacher actually sat on the backs of some of her more difficult students.

"I felt discomfort and pain," Zheng said, noting that stretch has now become extremely difficult to practice.

Now two years into her yoga journey, Zheng learned she has a herniated disc, and that the necessary procedure will make further yoga practice impossible. Doctors will insert 4 alloy nails into her

fourth and fifth lumbar vertebrae to fuse the bones. She will no longer be able to flex that portion of her back.

Zheng is one of the many who are practicing yoga. The exercise has been wildly popular in China, and almost every gym offers a yoga class.

But only 10 percent of yoga practitioners are aware that improper technique can lead to serious bodily injury. China's orthopedists can attest to this ignorance, as they treat more and more patients who are injured in practice, according to reports from the *China Youth Daily*.

To help the people learn how to safely practice yoga, sporting goods company Li-Ning has launched a month-long Inner Shine Camp that is free for local women.

By offering systematic training by professional dance and yoga teachers, Li-Ning hopes to educate people to pay more attention to safety when exercising.

Potential harm

Zhao Beiyang, a yoga teacher at Inner Shine Camp and recipient of many international awards, said there are three types of yoga learners who are easily hurt.

"The first group is those who want to lose weight fast," Zhao said, adding that some of them attempt difficult postures that have a high strength requirement.

"Forced yoga always does more harm than good," she said.

Without an experienced teacher, yoga learners are easily injured by attempting incorrect postures, she said.

Zhao said a lack of a warm-up exercise and limited knowledge about proper breathing can make yoga extremely hard on the body.

She also said that new practitioners with little flexibility can damage their muscles, possibly to the point of causing internal bleeding. Some yoga poses can even fracture the body's more delicate bones, especially if the student is experiencing the early effects of

osteoporosis.

"It is also not knee-friendly and can cause long-lasting damage to the joints," she said.

"The extreme stretching exercises at the heart of the discipline cause severe stress on joints, leading to arthritis," Zhao said.

Extreme yoga postures could cause stress and damage cartilage in people who are not used to doing such strenuous exercise. Some yoga poses – especially the hatha series – can even cause gastric problems.

Yoga poses, such as kundalini yoga, done wrong can have adverse mental effects. Called kundalini syndrome, the effects include confusion, anxiety, panic attacks, headaches and arrhythmia.

"While there usually is pain associated with exercise, yoga should not cause extreme pain. It is normal to be sore after first starting yoga, but soreness should pass within a day or two," Zhao said. Pain that doesn't pass requires speedy medical attention, she said.

Photos provided by Evelyn Li

Tips for safe yoga

1. Learn from a trained, experienced instructor. Yoga is best learned and practiced under the guidance of a certified tutor who will be able to tell whether you are doing the poses properly.

2. Inform your instructor if you are pregnant or have any serious injuries, a recent surgery or any debilitating ailments such as a heart condition or high or

low blood pressure. They will modify the program or suggest special exercises to suit your needs.

3. Remain within your limits. Enrolling in a yoga class that is too advanced is always a bad idea and will easily result in injury. No matter how great your health and physical condition, don't expect to start yoga in the middle or at the top. Yoga

should always begin with the basics so your muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones and tissues can adapt to the various postures.

4. Always start yoga with a warm-up exercise. This will loosen and relax all your muscles and promote circulation. Stretching, squeezing, swinging from side to side and jogging in place are all good ways to warm up and

increase flexibility.

5. Insist on loose, comfortable clothing. Yoga is a lot more enjoyable when you are comfortable, so what you wear will make all the difference. Yoga calls for a wide range of movements, so avoid tight, heavy clothes that may restrict your range of motion.

6. Yoga is not a competitive sport or practice. If you practice yoga together

with other individuals, never make the mistake of comparing performance. If you feel you are being left behind, talk to your instructor. Continue on your own at your own pace. Never force or push yourself to keep up with the class. With yoga, there is no finish line.

7. Practice yoga one hour before or after meals to avoid upsetting your stomach.

Easter holiday on islands of paradise

By Li Zhixin

Easter is approaching, and while for some that means time for scavenging for colored eggs and eating chocolates, for others the holiday is an important occasion to *really* celebrate.

Greeks flock to Corfu, the second largest of the Ionian Islands, a cosmopolitan center and natural paradise and one of the most popular places to celebrate Easter.

With the island immersed in the colors and aromas of spring, this is the perfect place to experience the Christian Holy Week and take part in rituals that have been passed down from ancient times.



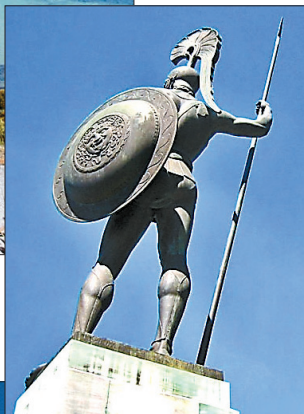
Chora-of-Patmos



Patmos Livadi



Achillion



Cave of the Apocalypse

The island of Corfu, located just off the western coast of Greece, covers an area of 592 square kilometers. It enjoys a mild Mediterranean climate along with excellent beaches, making it a popular tourist destination.

The island is also impressive for its forts, narrow streets, tall houses, flower-filled gardens, arcades and balconies with elaborate wrought-iron fences.

The Venetian-built town hall and church of St. Spyridon, the patron saint of Corfu, are imbued with history. Also notable are the Achillion Palace and church of the Virgin Mary of Ksenon.

Natural wonders also make this island seem like a paradise, from Mt. Paleokastritsa (the island's highest peak, at 906 meters) to the terraces of Kanoni. At Corfu's northern coast, visitors will find crystal-clear water, scenic coves and lush vegetation – more than 3 million olive trees hug against the deep blue sea.

Corfu is a favorite holiday destination for young people. They flock there in droves in the summer to soak up the sun and swim in the warm sea. At night they enjoy a traditional Greek meal while being entertained by Greek dancers, or visit some of the bars and dance clubs that cater to tourists.

The island's capital, or Corfu Town, is well worth visiting. The town itself is split into Old and New Town. Elegant churches, cobbled streets and fortresses stand tall in Old Town, while cosmopolitan shops in New Town sell souvenirs and luxury items made of gold.

Corfu has numerous beaches along its 217-kilometer coastline. In addition, the people are straightforward, fun-loving and friendly.

Religious celebrations around Easter in Corfu

1. Good Monday (April 18)

Islanders go shopping in order to prepare for the celebrations to come. The distinctive aromas of baking foyats – a kind of brioche decorated with a red egg – and mandolato, a nobles' favorite of macaroon made of almond and honey, waft through the air.

2. Good Tuesday (April 19)

Visitors can listen to the story of Mary Magdalene sung as a hymn in city churches in the afternoon. At around 9 pm, a music and poetry event with the theme "From Golgotha to Resurrection" begins at the Peristyle of the Old Palace.

3. Good Wednesday (April 20)

Corfiots will attend the Holy Unction at noon. At 8:30 pm, they fill up the Municipal Theater to hear the Municipal Chorus sing ecclesiastical hymns.

4. Maundy Thursday (April 21)

The Service of the Holy Passion will be held in the churches. In the Duomo, the Catholic Cathedral, 12 candles are lit and put out one at a time after the reading of each of the 12 Gospels. On the same day, the ringing of the first bell means it is time for Easter eggs to be dyed red, a custom that symbolizes the rebirth of life and nature.

Continued on page 21...



...continued from page 20

5. Good Friday (April 22)

On this day, the funeral chimes of bells will wake you in the morning. Ecclesiastical ceremonies commemorate Christ's descent from the cross.

Young girls decorate the Epitaphs, whose circumambulation begins early in the afternoon accompanied by choruses and bands. The last Epitaph – and the most impressive one – the Epitaph of Corfu Cathedral, makes its appearance at 10 pm.

6. Easter Saturday (April 23)

At 6 am at the church of the Virgin Mary of Ksénon, the custom of the artificial earthquake re-enacts the earthquake that followed Christ's resurrection. At 11 am, the first Resurrection is announced. People say the phrase "Christós Anésti" (Christ is risen) to one another. The response is "Alithós Anésti" (he has truly risen).

Be prepared to experience a truly unique celebration: Christós Anésti is proclaimed against a background of loudly pealing bells and the joyful sounds of the bands as they parade through the streets. People hurl clay pots from windows and balconies that crash noisily on the streets below.

At night, people will attend the Greek Catholic Mass of the Resurrection in Duomo or the Greek Orthodox Resurrection Service at Páno Platía (Upper Square). Visitors will find themselves surrounded by thousands of lit candles: on balconies and windowsills, or held by others attending the ceremony. The Resurrection of Christ is celebrated at noon sharp with drumbeats and fireworks.

7. Easter Sunday (April 24)

To celebrate Easter Sunday after attending the Service of Love, venture out of Corfu and into the countryside and villages to participate in all the festivities held throughout the island.

And don't leave before paying a visit to the nearby islands, which are full of beautiful sceneries and interesting customs and practices.

Other Greek island recommendations

Patmos: The Jerusalem of the Aegean

Known around the world as the sacred island where St. John wrote the Book of Revelation, Patmos is an ideal destination for nature lovers thanks to its lace-like coastline, sheer cliffs and volcanic soil.

Chios: A mastic-scented island with fascinating history

Chios is famous for its mastic trees. Alongside its rich history starting from the Neolithic Age and including adventures with Genoese pirates and the Turks during the Greek Revolution, Chios also claims to be the birthplace of Homer. It was also the birthplace of eminent Greek politicians and writers such as Adaman-



Marching Band in Corfu



Easte in Corfou

tios Korais, Emmanouil Roidis and Alexandre Mavrokordatos.

Northeastern Aegean Islands

Just a breath away from the Asia Minor coast in the north-eastern part of the Aegean Sea, visitors can find an impressive collection of five big islands, Ikaria, Samos, Limnos, Lesvos, Hios, and eight smaller ones, Ayios Efstratios, Ayios Minas, Antipsara, Thymaina, Inousses, Samiopoula, Fournoi and Psara. Hot springs, fortress villages, rich history, delicious seafood and some of the best beaches in the Aegean also offer visitors memorable experiences.

Dodecanese

The island complex of Dodecanese in the south-eastern Aegean is the sunniest corner in Greece. Twelve large islands and numerous smaller ones with crystal clear waters, sandy or pebbly beaches, important archaeological finds, imposing Byzantine and medieval monuments and unique traditional settlements will be a feast for your eyes and enrich your experience in the country. If you are desperately seeking to discover lesser-known and unspoiled destinations, visit Leros or Pserimos.

(Some information and photos are provided by the Greek National Tourism Organization's Beijing office.)



A street in Chora



Skala of patmos

Hotel



Sunworld Dynasty your top spring destination

Centrally located in the city and surrounded by historical sites and the celebrated commercial center, Sunworld Dynasty Hotel promises to make your spring stay an exceptional experience.

Pamper yourself at our modern and comfortable amenities and enjoy benefits such as free use of the gym and pool, high-speed wired and wireless Internet access in your room, Sunrider premier herbal toiletries and an ionic air purifier to make your relaxing room healthier.

Enjoy the gourmet buffet diner at Dynasty Plaza on the 3rd floor, the largest atrium plaza in the entire Asia-Pacific region, and delight in a sumptuous seafood extravaganza with your choice of delectable seafoods, including abalones and lobsters.

Where: Sunworld Dynasty Hotel, Beijing, 50 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 5816 8888 ext. 8311

Opposite House gets top honors from TimeOut

Adding to its string of local and international awards, The Opposite House won top honors for

its contemporary North Asian restaurant Bei last night at TimeOut, Beijing magazine's annual food awards. Bei was named Restaurant of the Year and, for the second consecutive year, Best Asian Restaurant.

Bei is an assertive reinterpretation of traditional north Asian dishes from Japan, Northern China and Korea. Its kitchen is helmed by New Orleans Chef de Cuisine Max Levy, who trained under some of Japan's top sushi masters. Levy was awarded Chef of the Year by TimeOut at the food awards in 2010.

"It's great for the team to be recognized again by TimeOut magazine. Bei is incredibly popular with international guests and is now becoming a favorite of the Beijing dining public," said Anthony Ross, general manager of The Opposite House.

Sofitel Wanda presents "Do Disturb!"

Sofitel Wanda Beijing and the French Embassy are teaming up with the sophisticated and contemporary French art duo La cellule — Becquemin and Sagot — to present a creative and playful artistic re-interpretation of the luxury hotel chain's world-renowned French hospitality. "Do Disturb!" opened March 16, and Alexandre, general manager of Sofitel Wanda Beijing, was honored to be present at the event with Sylvie-Agnès Berman, the French ambassador to China.

Intrigued, surprised, curious, unused, timid and excited — many are the qualifiers one could use to describe the audience's reaction. No heart left the uncommon cocktail party untouched. Waiters served as pieces of the performance art, and their interactions with the guests were an important part of this unconventional creation.

"Do Disturb!" was one of many events hosted by Sofitel Luxury Hotels to support art and culture. At the Sofitel Wanda Beijing and all over the world, Sofitel is involved in art and culture events related to food, fashion, history, music and theater.

Airline



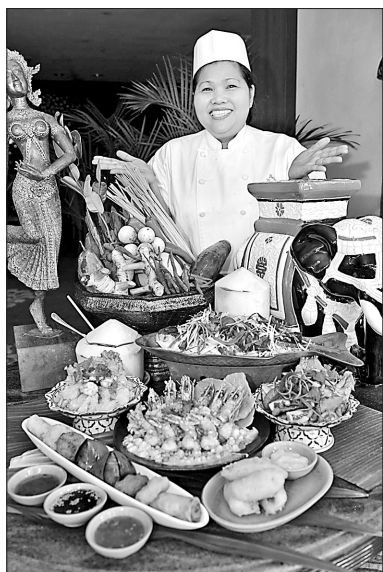
Jetstar grows with flights between Hangzhou and Singapore

Low-fare leader Jetstar recently touched down at its seventh greater-China airport: Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. The direct flight from Singapore made it the first carrier to offer direct service between the two cities.

Jetstar is the largest low-cost carrier in Asia in terms of revenue, flying more than 2,500 flights per week to some 50 Asia-Pacific destinations.

As the top low-cost carrier in Singapore, Jetstar will be flying the Singapore-Hangzhou route four times per week using its growing fleet of A320 aircraft.

Dining



Flavors of Thailand at Café Cha

For six nights only, popular Thai chef Pachuen Rattanachai will be in Beijing to whet your appetite and tantalize your taste buds. Chef Pachuen spent 15 years creating secret Thai-style recipes, and now she is bringing her signature dishes to Beijing. Come try Wok-Fried Crab with Curry and Tom Yum Goong made using the freshest and finest produce. This April is your chance to be whisked

away to Thailand.

Where: Café Cha, Shangri-La Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: April 12-17
Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 6715

Easter Brunch at Kranzler's

For an Easter feast the family will cherish, choose Kranzler's buffet brunch. The buffet's gourmet spread of international delicacies includes fresh Canadian lobster and Australian rib-eye beef. Your little ones will be egg-static for our Easter egg painting, prize-winning egg hunt and giant Easter egg fruit cake!

Where: Kranzler's, Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: April 24, 11:30 am – 3 pm

Cost: 528 yuan, includes free Duval Leroy champagne, home-brewed Paulaner beer and select wines; 188 yuan for children under 12, with access to the House of Knowledge care center (15 percent gratuity)
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4222

Email: restaurant.beijing@kempinski.com

Kempi Deli's Easter treats

Fill your Easter basket with a scrumptious range of seasonal cakes and pastries from Kempie Deli. Treat your little ones to our chocolate chip bunny bread, or pick up a romantic box of bronze, silver and gold pralines for that special someone. Who could resist delicious hot cross buns fresh from the oven?

Where: Kempie Deli, Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: April 15-24, 1 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4227
Email: restaurant.beijing@kempinski.com



Treats for the rebirth

Christians believe that when their Messiah, Jesus Christ, was reborn, the earth filled with joy. Rediscover that joy with our tasty Easter goodies! From Easter eggs to Easter bunnies, our Gourmet Corner's chocolate creations know no bounds.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 17-30
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 43

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

His bark is worse than his bite

By Li Zhixin

Zhang Fengwei, one of my cousins from southwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, hasn't visited his grandparents' graves for more than five years. He works in Shenzhen, so it is inconvenient for him to get to his hometown, even during the three-day Tomb-Sweeping Festival.

This year, his parents called him several times urging him to go home and visit his grandparents' grave on Tomb-Sweeping Day, especially since this year marks the 10th of his grandfather's passing.

Zhang promised his parents he would ask his boss for two-week's leave in advance.

However, problems arose. Despite his best efforts, Zhang failed to book his train ticket to Xi'an, where he

would transfer to Urumchi. His colleague advised him to fly back, but Zhang didn't want to spend 1,500 yuan (almost half a month's salary) on a plane air ticket. He ended up purchasing a train ticket from scalpers.

His colleagues then gave him the miserable news that he bought a counterfeit.

"I have told you several times to not trust scalpers. Look, am I right?" said Chen Ling, Zhang's best friend who works in the same department with him. "May they die sonless!"

Although Chen's curse was a passing remark, it made the boss very uncomfortable as he has engaged in speculative reselling of tickets before – as everyone in the company knew.

Zhang sensed that something was different in the working environment,

but as the saying goes, split water cannot be gathered again. In order to prevent the boss from seeking revenge on Chen, he went into his boss' office and said, "I apologize for Chen, he has a sharp mouth but tofu heart. He spoke rudely just because he was indignant for me."

"I know that his bark is worse than his bite," the boss said. "Well, even though his words weren't directed at me, they were malicious. But don't worry, I won't fire him just because of what he just said. Anyway, he is not a fifth wheel in my company."

"Fifth wheel?" Zhang was confused. "What do you mean?"

"I mean he is not unnecessary. He is as excellent as you in terms of his work performance."

Those words comforted Zhang more than Chen's curse ever could.



Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Opens the Waterhouse

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

This sign is exactly correct – but what does it mean?

The first character is *kai*, which means, among other things, to open (such as a door or for business), bloom (like what the flowers are currently doing), come undone (like a shoelace, but not your mind), drive (a Hummer), start (a race, an exam), write out (a prescription), turn on (a light) and serve (dinner). It can also be used to describe when water begins to boil.

The second character on the sign is, indeed, water, or *shui*. If you use your imagination, you can see the water's flow in the middle stroke and two eddies on the sides.



Last, the character *fang* really does mean house or room. The top part looks sort of like a P with a hat on, meaning door or family. The bottom half that looks kind of like a stickman running is *fang*, which means a lot of things but here it's just gives the character its sound.

Now, I would like to sidetrack for a moment to point out the excellent usage of the article "the" in the English translation of the sign. It is a writing teacher's pleasure to see "the" used correctly, especially because it isn't in the Chinese. Thank you.

Let's put the three characters together. *Kaishhui* means "boiling water." You can ask for *kaishhui* at the restaurant when your teapot is empty. *Shuifang* can mean "waterhouse" or perhaps "water room," like at a day-care. A *kaishuifang* is a place where you can get boiling water – at a university, for example, when you are not allowed to have a kettle in your rooms.

It is not the key to the waterhouse.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. Science movie fans are sure to find it two hours well spent

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): Where is the error? It seems to be a perfect sentence. However, if you look at it more carefully, you will find the problem lies in the subject clause of the verb "to find." We know that to find may take a compound subject, as in, We find him a very friendly person. It comprises a direct and an indirect object. Let's look at the sample sentence. The verb to find takes three objects: find it two hours well spent. It is obviously absurd. How to correct it? We just try to make it a compound object: Science movie fans are sure to find the two hours well spent.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): I suspect this is an example of a spoken English colloquialism coming into written English! Sometimes English used in advertising – or even in the movies – is grammatically incorrect and you have to develop a sense for differentiating between vernacular and academic English.

2. The more people you have on the road, the most it costs.

ZS: We used to have the comparative expression "the more ... the more." I don't think the combination "the more ... the most" is acceptable grammatically. For example, we say: The more you read the book, the deeper you will understand it. The more people you contact, the more profoundly you will understand the reality. So, the sample sentence should be: The more people you have on the road, the more it costs.

TBZ: I agree. This is an example of things agreeing across the whole sentence. "More" – an increasing process – cannot equal "most" – the thing at the very top of the heap.

3. An innovate singer-songwriter

ZS: The writer is confused with the function of the word "innovate." It is a verb, not an adjective. Yes, in English, you will see some words which can be both a verb and an adjective, for instance, separate, integrate, degenerate, etc. For example, we say: The American Constitution separates the administrative power from the judicial power. "Separate" is a verb. When it is an adjective, we say: He talks about the issue on separate occasions. The different ideas have been integrated into a unified plan. Consider the logic as an integrate whole. Here, we cannot use "innovate" as an adjective. It has to be: An innovative singer-songwriter.

TBZ: This is a very common mistake and can be remedied, I think, by doing more active reading. When you are reading, once you get through the new vocabulary, pay attention to the grammatical structures in the word order. Don't be afraid to read children's books! The vocabulary tends to be easier, but the grammar follows the same, basic structures of anything more difficult.

4. The film is showing every Saturday night at Broadway Cinematheque.

ZS: As a matter of fact, increasingly in modern English, verbs that have a passive sense are used in an active sense. For instance, The branches of the apple tree are weighed heavily with fruit. The box weighs 10 pounds. "To show" indeed can be used as an intransitive verb. For instance, Several fashion designers are showing in New York. But, I don't think the verb to show in this case can be used in this way. It has to be: The film is being shown every Saturday night at Broadway Cinematheque. However, our English friends may say if it is conversational, it is permitted.

TBZ: Yep. Again, it's conversational but it may (or may not) be acceptable on your written exam!



Movie of the week

There are no shortage of top-notch London gangster movies, such as *Snatch* and *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. It's obvious that *London Boulevard* was aspiring to the success of these films with its struggling hero who faces a new life. Unfortunately, the film was doomed from the start by bad screenwriting.

The original story loses far, far too much of its rhythm in making the transition to the screen. Kira Knightley and Colin Farrel gave average performances. Only the appearance by David Thewlis – Professor Lupin to Harry Potter fans – was really worth watching. As the manager of a female starlet, a rocker and a hippie, he is by far the coolest guy in the show.

Synopsis

London Boulevard is adapted from a bestselling book by Ken Bruen. The crime drama takes place on the streets of London, where South London a criminal Mitchel tries to give up his gangster past after being released from prison. He finds new work as a handyman for a reclusive young actress.

But London's seedy underworld proves inescapable.

Scene 1

(Free from prison, Mitchel is picked up by his old friend Billy.)

Billy (B): Here's something new for you. You can't smoke in the pub. They done it in Ireland. They done it, f---k me, they done it in France. New York, they've made the fags (1), so they burn out if you leave them in the ashtray. Tastes like shit as well.

Mitchel (M): You been to New York, Billy?

B: Well, that's another story, isn't it?

(Billy brings Mitchel to a house.)

B: The guy that owned this flat, this doctor, got into heavy schtook (2) with, shall we say, a money lender. Left everything.

M: You're the money lender?

B: Well ... part of a firm. And, we'd like you to be onboard.

M: I don't think so, Billy.

B: Still, you stay. Think about it. Whatever. Where you gonna go otherwise, right? What? Eighty pounds they give you to make your way in London. In London? What is it, Forty-seven pounds a week jobseekers allowance? fifty pounds a week, this place. On Kennington Road. Here.

(Billy takes out a cell phone.)

M: I won't use it. You need it. And you need me, mate. You need your friend, Billy.



Scene 2

(At a party, Mitchel meets Penny, who offers him a job.)

Penny (P): Mad Tommy said ... Mad Tommy with the mad hair-piece, that this party was for a criminal, just out of Pentonville.

M: I was a criminal. Presently, I am just unemployed.

P: Are you handy (3)?

M: What, with hammers and such?

P: I might have something for you. A job, I mean. I'm serious. I am. Is it too little for you now?

What a tradesman makes?

M: No. I know how little I need.

P: To be happy?

M: To be alive.

P: I'm Penny.

M: I'm Mitchel.

P: Look, I have this, um, friend. We go back ages. She lives in Holland Park. She's ... retired.

M: Friend your age? Retired?

P: You'd know who it was if I told you. She's gone a bit Howard Hughes.



Scene 3

Charlotte (C): How did you become a criminal, since you're not a big oink (4) with a missing chromosome?

M: Do you want the real answer? Well, I was thinking about something else.

C: And what were you think-

ing about when you were thinking about something else?

M: Whatever it was, I wasn't thinking about it clearly enough.

C: We used to have parties. My husband's half-sister's step-father had a daughter by his previous ... God, no, I think it was his second previous. Strapping girl with big teeth and dyslexia. She got married here under an awning. So did I. It's the Cape Canaveral with shitty marriages.

M: Well, it's the garden for it.

C: So what was it like in prison?

M: The truth is, it was embarrassing.

C: Hmm. There's something to say about those roses, but I can't think what it would be.

M: Well ...

C: No, I don't want a plan for them. They're beyond f---ked. (Cameras clicking)

M: Now, you'd better go inside. They're on the roof. They're up there.

C: One day, I wondered what a shot of me dead would be worth. They pay big for morgue photos.

Vocabulary

1. fag: cigarette

2. schtook: slang for trouble

3. handy: skilled at common tasks

4. a big oink: here it means an exception or a trouble

(By Wang Yu)